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# THE BOOK OF EZRA.

*The High Priests.*—Great care was exercised by the Jews in keeping up the descent of the High Priesthood. The following is a list, taken from Calmet, of the High Priests of the Hebrews in succession until the return from the Captivity :—

| From Calmet. | From Scrip. Died B.C. | 1 Chron. vi. 3—15. | From Josephus. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 *Aaron* | 1452 | 1 Aaron. | 1 Aaron. |
| 2 *Eleazar* | 1433 | 2 Eleazar. | 2 Eleazar. |
| 3 *Phinehas* | 1414 | 3 Phinehas. | 3 Phinehas. |
| 4 *Abiezer* or *Abishua* | Under the Judges. | 4 Abishua. | 4 Abiezer. |
| 5 *Bukki* | | 5 Bukki. | 5 Bukki. |
| 6 *Uzzi* | | 6 Uzzi. | 6 Uzzi. |
| 7 *Eli*, of the race of Ithamar | 1116 | 7 Zerahiah. | 7 Eli. |
| 8 *Ahitub I.* | | 8 Meraioth. | 8 Ahitub. |
| 9 *Ahiah* lived | 1092 | 9 Amariah. | 9 Ahimelech. |
| 10 *Abimelech*, or *Abiathar*, slain by Saul | 1060 | 10 Ahitub. | 10 Abiathar. |
| 11 *Abiathar*, *Ahimelech*, or *Abimelech*, (under David) | 1015 | 11 Zadok I. | 11 Zadok. |
| 12 *Zadok I.* (under Saul, David, and Solomon) | 1004 | 12 Ahimaaz. | 12 Ahimaaz. |
| 13 *Ahimaaz* (under Rehoboam) | 974 | 13 Azariah. | 13 Azariah. |
| 14 *Azariah* (under Jehoshaphat), probably Amariah of 2 Chron. xix. 11. | 912 | 14 Johanan. (1 Chron. vi. 9, 10.) | 14 Joram. |
| 15 *Johanan*, perhaps Jehoiada under Joash, 2 Chron. xxiv. 15 (died aged 130) | 878 | 15 Azariah. | 15 Issus. |
| 16 *Azariah*, perhaps Zechariah, son of Jehoiada, killed | 840 | 16 Amariah. | 16 Axiora. |
| 17 *Amariah*, perhaps Azariah, under Uzziah | 783 | 17 Ahitub II. | 17 Phideas. |
| 18 *Ahitub II.* | Under Jotham of Judah. | 18 Zadok II. | 18 Sudeas. |
| 19 *Zadok II.* | | 19 Shallum. | 19 Julus. |
| 20 *Uriah*, under Ahaz, lived | 739 | 20 Hilkiah. | 20 Jotham. |
| 21 *Shallum*, father of Azariah, and grandfather of Hilkiah | | 21 Azariah. | 21 Uriah. |
| 22 *Azariah* in the time of Hezekiah | | 22 Seraiah. | 22 Neriah. |
| 23 *Hilkiah*, under Hezekiah | | 23 Jehozadak. | 23 Odeas. |
| 24 *Eliakim*, or *Joakim*, under Manasseh : he lived under Josiah to 624, called Hilkiah. | | 24 Joshua. (Hag. i. 1.) | 24 Saldum. |
| 25 *Azariah*, perhaps Neriah, father of Seraiah and of Baruch. | | | 25 Hilkiah. |
| 26 *Seraiah*, the last High Priest before the Captivity of Babylon, put to death | 590 | | 26 Seraiah. |
| 27 *Jehozadak*, during the Captivity, from 590 to 535. | | | 27 Jehozadak. |
| 28 *Joshua*, *Jeshua*, or *Jesus*, the son of Jehozadak, or Josedech, returned from Babylon | 536 | | 28 Jesus *or* Joshua.* |

* See *Josephus*, *Antiq.* lib. v. c. 15, lib. x. c. 11.

# Introduction.

**Title.** This Bk., with Nehemiah, was by the Jews united in one vol., and called the First and Second Bk. of Ezra. **Time.** This Bk. embraces a period of 79 yrs., com. with the edict of Cyrus, 536 B.C. **Author.** Allowed on all hands that portions of the Bk. are fr. Ezra's pen. The first person used ch. vii. 27, 28, and chaps. viii. and ix. Some (*De Wette*) think that the rest of the Bk. is by another hand. Others assign to Ezra the last 4 chaps. (as *Ld. A. Hervey*), but think the first 6 are by a dif. author. Others (as *Canon Rawlinson*) have no hesitation in assigning the whole to Ezra (see *Spk. Com.* iii. 386—7). But the Bk. is clearly divisible into 2 portions, of wh. Ezra is not equally the author in the same sense. The hist. in the first 6 chaps. (fr. 1st yr. of Cyrus, B.C. 538, to 6th yr. of Darius Hystaspes, B.C. 516) is div. by 57 yrs. fr. the hist. of last 4 chaps., wh. belong to 7th and 8th yrs. of Artaxerxes Longimanus (458—457 B.C.). Ezra lived in this latter period, and his commission dates 458 B.C. (vii. 14), when he was not less than 30 (he was then a "ready scribe," vii. 6, and teacher of the law, *v.* 10) and prob. not more than 50 yrs. of age. His birth, therefore, falls in the period 508—488 B.C.; and the events of 538—516 B.C. belong to the time of his father or grandfa. Thus he was the *sole author* of the second sect. (vii.—x.), and *compiler* of the first (i.—vi.).

An examination of the work itself indicates a strong probability that documents were its main source. The decree of Cyrus (i. 2—4), the letter of Rehum (iv. 8—16), the reply of Artaxerxes (iv. 17—22), the letter of Tatnai (v. 7—17), the decree of Darius (vi. 3—12), are plainly documents. Copies of them would necessarily exist in the Persian archives in Ezra's time, and might probably exist also at Jerusalem. The lists contained in chaps. i. and ii. consisting as they do almost wholly of names and numbers, must also, it would seem, have been derived from documents, since they are far too exact to be the result of mere inquiry. This conclusion, which it would be natural to draw from Ezra alone, is confirmed by a comparison of Ezra ii. with Nehemiah vii. and Esdras v., which contain lists parallel to those in Ezra ii., but clearly not drawn from them—lists of which the most reasonable account is, that they were taken from the same document that the writer of Ezra used, a document which was illegible in parts, and in others difficult to decipher. If this be allowed, then the documentary portion of the first section of Ezra will amount to 112 verses out of 157, or to considerably more than two-thirds of the whole; and Ezra's own direct contributions to the narrative will be reduced to 45 verses, or less than three-fourths.

# Synopsis.

*(According to Horne.)*

**PART I.—From the return under Zerubbabel to rebuilding of the Temple.**

*Sect.* 1. Edict of Cyrus ..... i., ii.
*Sect.* 2. Temple begun ..... iii., iv.
*Sect.* 3. Temple finished ..... v., vi.

**PART II.—Arrival of Ezra at Jerusalem, and reformation under him.**

*Sect.* 1. Ezra sets out ..... vii.
*Sect.* 2. His retinue and arrival ..... viii.
*Sect.* 3. The reformation ..... ix., x.

*(According to Angus.)*

**PART I.—The return from captivity.**

(*a*) Decree of Cyrus ..... i.
(*b*) Those who returned ..... ii.
(*c*) The altar and foundation ..... iii.
(*d*) Samaritan opposition ..... iv.
(*e*) Haggai and Zechariah, etc. ..... v.
(*f*) Decree of Darius ..... vi.

**PART II.—Ezra's reformation.**

(*a*) Ezra's commission ..... vii., viii.
(*b*) Ezra's lament for national sin ..... ix.
(*c*) Popular repentance and reform ..... x.

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**proclamation of Cyrus**

*a* 2 Ch. xxxvi. 22—23.

"The identity of the termination of Chron. with the commenc. of Ezra shows one writer."—*Dr. Davidson.*

"The Book of Chron. ends with hist. of destr. of temple, and with recital of edict for building of second temple. The Bk. of Ezra describes its restoration."—*Bp. Wordsworth.*

*b* 2 Ch. xxxvi. 22, 23; Jer. xxv. 12, xxix. 10.

*c* Da. ii. 37.

*d* "Many of the richer Jews preferred to remain at Babylon" (*Jos. Ant.* xi. 1). The Book of Esther gives us a view of them and their condition.

*e Rawlinson's Bamp. Lec.*

**the people provide for the return**

*a* Some of Ephraim and Manasseh also returned and settled at Jerus. 1 Ch. ix. 3.

"One of the blessings resulting fr. the cap. was, that the schism between Judah and Israel was healed, and

## *CHAPTER THE FIRST.*

**1—4.** (1) **first . . Persia,**[a] *i.e.* first year after cap. of Babylon. **by . . fulfil,**[b] the 70 yrs. of Jer. date from B.C. 605, when Nebuchadnezzar took Jerus. **Lord . . Persia,** men are sometimes doing God's will when they think only of pleasing themselves. (2) **saith . . Persia,** *etc.*, Cyrus was prob. acq. with the writings of Isa., Jer. and Dan.[c] (3) **who . . you,** my subjects. **of . . people,** the Jews, *vv.* 3—5 include the proclamation. (4) **whosoever . . sojourneth,**[d] some might have ties fr. wh. they could not be immediately released.

*The decree of Cyrus.*—From the circumstances of the case we learn—I. That with many afflictions, there go a consolation and a support. II. That we have a striking example of the fulfilment of prophecy. III. That God, when He has a purpose to perform, can easily bring it to pass. IV. This God, who thus fulfilled His word in this wonderful manner, is our Father. V. That this faithfulness of God is a caution to the impenitent.

*The Persian god Ormuzd.*—Two things are specially remarkable in this passage,—the strongly marked religious character, very unusual in heathen documents, and the distinctness with which it asserts the unity of God, and thence identifies the God of the Persians with the God of the Jews. Both these points receive abundant illustration from the Persian cuneiform inscriptions, in which the recognition of a single supreme god, Ormuzd, and the clear and constant ascription to him of the direction of all mundane affairs, are leading features. In all the Persian monuments of any length, the monarch makes the acknowledgment that "Ormuzd has bestowed on him his empire." Every success that is gained is "by the grace of Ormuzd." The name of Ormuzd occurs in almost every other paragraph of the Behistun inscription. No public monuments, with such a pervading religious spirit, have ever been discovered among the records of any heathen nation as those of the Persian kings; and through all of them, down to the time of Artaxerxes Ochus, the name of Ormuzd stands alone and unapproachable as that of the Supreme Lord of earth and heaven. The title "Lord of Heaven," which runs as a sort of catchword through these Chaldee translations of the Persian records, is not indeed in the cuneiform monuments distinctly attached to him as an epithet, but the common formula wherewith inscriptions open sets him forth as "the great god, Ormuzd, who gave both earth and heaven to mankind."[e]

**5, 6.** (5) **chief . . Benjamin,**[a] in whose inheritance the temp. was situated. (6) **besides . . offered,** they gave them due proportion, and a freewill offering beside.

*Zerubbabel's return* (*vv.* 5, 6)—Mentioned by Matt. i. 12.—Among the ancestors of the Saviour, Zerubbabel has been regarded as a type of Him. I. Like him our Saviour was born in a strange land. II. Like him, a king in disguise our Saviour dwelt among the people He came to save. III. Like him our Saviour seeks to gather the faithful together, and lead them forth into the glorious liberty of the children of God. IV. Like him our Leader meets and overcomes many difficulties. Learn:—

Some questions for us concerning our Leader. (1) Have we recognised His presence? (2) Have we obeyed His voice? (3) Are we following His leadership? (4) Do we purpose in all things to do His bidding?

*The Christian citizen.*—An old English picture represents a king, with the motto beneath, "I govern all;" a bishop with this sentence, "I pray for all;" a soldier with the inscription, "I fight for all;" and a farmer, who reluctantly draws forth a purse, and exclaims with rueful countenance, "I pay for all." The Christian citizen combines in himself the functions of these four. He is king, prophet, warrior, and labourer. He governs, prays, and fights for himself, and pays all expenses.

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the temple at Jerus. bec. the com. centre of unity to those who had been formerly separated as rivals and enemies, and they were all joined together in the com. name of Jews." — *Bp. Wordsworth.*

**7—11.** (7) **which . . Jerusalem,**[a] when he pillaged the temp. **put . . God,** esp. in the temple of Bel.[b] (8) **Mithredath** (*given by Mithras*), *i.e.* genius of the *sun*, wh. was object of Persian worship.[c] **Sheshbazzar,**[d] *i.e.* Zerubbabel. (9) **chargers,** basins to receive blood of victims. **knives,** sacrificial knives. (10) **basons,** with lids. (11) **all . . hundred,** or 2,901 of var. kinds not specified above.

**the temple vessels restored**

*a* 2 Ki. xxiv. 13, xxv. 14; Jer. xxvii. 16, xxviii. 6, lii. 18.

*b* Da. i. 2.

*c* The word Cyrus = sun.

*d* iii. 2, 8, v. 14, 16; Mat. i. 12; Lu. iii. 27.

*The evil of forsaking God.*—If you put your finger in the fire, the evil is not the pain suffered, but the destruction of the finger. The pain is a good; it evinces the continuance of life in the finger, resisting the fire that destroys it, and warning you to withdraw it. The evil is complete when the calcined bone lies insensible consuming in the fire. So the evil of sin is not the suffering which it causes, but the bosom pleasure which it gives. The suffering from sin is so far good as it shows the continuance of moral sensibility. The evil is when the heart is happy—insensible in the fire.[e]

*v.* 9. *J. Cockram,* "The Knives," *On Peculiar Texts,* 108.

*e Harris.*

## *CHAPTER THE SECOND.*

**1—6.** (1) **these . . province,**[a] *i.e.* of Judah. (2) **Zerubbabel,** putative grandson of Jeconiah. His name = born at Babel. **Jeshua,** or *Joshua.* **Nehemiah,** not the Nehemiah of the next bk. **Mordecai,** not Esther's relative. (3, 4) **Parosh . . Shephatiah,** how carefully the family records were kept during the capy. (5) **Arah . . five,** Neh. gives 652. (6) **Pahath-moab . . twelve,** 2,818 in Neh.

**the number of the people that return**

*a* Both Ezra and Neh. give a sum total of 42,360 men, and 7,337 men servants and maid servants. Ezra's list was first made B.C. 536, but not inserted in the record till he got his commission from Artaxerxes, B.C. 458. Nehemiah's list dates fr. B.C. 536, and was found by him at Jerus. ab. B.C. 433.

*b Bp. Porteous.*

*A good citizen.*—He who undertakes an occupation of great toil and great danger for the purpose of serving, defending, and protecting his country, is a most valuable and respectable member of society; and if he conducts himself with valour, fidelity, and humanity, and amidst the horrors of war cultivates the gentle manners of peace, and the virtues of a devout and holy life, he most amply deserves, and will assuredly receive, the esteem. the admiration, and the applause of his grateful country; and, what is of still greater importance, the approbation of his God.[b]

**7—13.** (10) **Bani,** or *Binnui.*[a] (13) **six . . six,** note the number.

*a* Neh. vii. 15.

*The power of the Church.*—A thousand grains of powder, or a thousand barrels, if you please, scattered a grain in a place and fired at intervals, would burn it is true, but would produce no

"Every Christian is born great because he is born

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for heaven." — *Massillon.*

*c W. E. Boardman.*

*a* Ne. vii. 24.

*b Dr. Guthrie.*

"As in Noah's ark there were the clean and the unclean, raven and dove, leopard and kid, the cruel lion with the gentle lamb; so in the Church of Christ on earth you will find the same diversities and differences of human character."—*Dr. Guthrie.*

*c Teachers' Treas.*

*a* Neh. vii. 25.

*b* Mic. v. 2.

*c* Neh. vii. 28.

[1] This is the state of the Church militant: she is like the ark floating upon the waters, like a lily growing among thorns, like the bush which burned with fire, and was not consumed; so the city of God is always besieged, but never ruined." — *Henry Smith.*
*d J. Bate.*

*a* Neh. vii. 33.

"Do you ask, 'Why not do away with the Church, if its members make so many mistakes?' Would you take away the lighthouse because careless mariners, through wrong

concussion. Placed together, however, in effective position, they would lift up a mountain and cast it into the sea. Even so the whole Church, filled with faith, and fired by the Holy One who gave the tongues of fire on the day of Pentecost, will remove every mountain, fill up every valley, cast up the way of the Lord, and usher in the jubilee of redemption.[c]

**14—18.** (18) **Jorah,** or *Hariah.*[a]

*Latent power in the Church.*—It is impossible to over-estimate, or rather to estimate, power that lies latent in our churches. We talk of the power that was latent in steam—latent till Watt evoked its spirit from the waters, and set the giant to turn the iron arms of machinery. We talk of the power that was latent in the skies till science climbed their heights, and, seizing the spirit of the thunder, chained it to our surface—abolishing distance, outstripping the wings of time, and flashing our thoughts across rolling seas to distant continents. Yet what are these to the moral power that lies asleep in the congregations of our country and of the Christian world![b]—*The right persuasion.*—In terrible agony a soldier lay down in the hospital. A visitor asked him, "What Church are you of?" "Of the Church of Christ," he replied. "I mean of what persuasion are you?" then inquired the visitor. "Persuasion?" said the dying man, as his eyes looked heavenward, beaming with love to the Saviour,—"I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate me from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus."[c]

**19—24.** (20) **Gibbar,** Gibeon.[a] (21) **an . . three,** one of the smaller companies: but the Messiah came hence.[b] (24) **Azmaveth,** or *Bethazmaveth.*[c]

*Divisions in the Church.*—There are divisions in the great kingdom of creation: divisions between the lands and waters; divisions between islands and continents; divisions between continents and continents; divisions between vegetation and minerals; divisions in birds, fishes, creeping things, animals of all kinds; divisions among men; and yet there are great principles, laws, and operations which unite them together, as the one harmonious workmanship of Almighty wisdom and power. So it is in the Church of Christ. There are divisions in regard to discipline, forms of worship, creeds of belief, means of grace, modes of working, names of distinction, places of abode, &c.; but beneath these, and of more importance, there run grand laws and elements which bind together the Church of Christ in one glorious body, of which He is the Head.[d]

**25—30.** (29) Called "the other Nebo,"[a] *i.e.* not of N. beyond Jordan in tr. of Reuben, but of that N. called Nob bef. the capy.

*Diversity in the Church.*—As he that entereth into a fair and goodly goldsmith-shop, richly furnished with precious pearls and costly jewels of all sorts, ought not to mistake those costly treasures because he seeth among them a black furnace, dusty coals, and sundry instruments of base metal (for these must be had to make those jewels); so in the Church of God, where are innumerable men of diverse gifts and qualities, if a man see there some things which he dislikes, he ought not therefore to pick a quarrel with the Church, or to neglect his own duty on this account.—

*Character the evidence of religion.*—Let me but once paint a glowing picture like the Madonna ; would you criticise it by going behind it to see what the canvas was made of, or by examining the pigments, and inquiring how they were compounded? There is the result—a painting, which stands at the head of faces in the whole history of art. There is one process by which you can meet reasoning and sceptical tendencies that cannot be gainsaid, namely, produce in another man a character which represents God among men, in human form again, with His power to love, with His self-denying, self-sacrificing love, with His gentleness, His purity, His grace and beauty ; set forth that character and say, "There is the evidence of religion." If you bring me an apple large and beauteous, and then undertake to persuade me by any argument that it is impossible that such a fruit should have grown in such a clime, I answer that no ship has touched this shore ; here is the apple, there is the tree ; there are others like it hanging on the tree, and this apple has grown upon this tree. You say it is impossible ; that tree cannot grow here ; the season is too short, the climate is too cold for such fruit. But, after all, is not a tree full of apples better than any and all physiological arguments on the face of the earth? I do not care what botanists may say. Show me the tree with the apples on it. and I will take the tree as an argument against them all. Show me a man whose character lifts him above commen men ; whose head shines like a lighthouse (no matter how he is built at the bottom) ; show me a man that carries in him the power of a Divine life (and no man can mistake what that power is when he sees it)—he is an epitome of Christianity, and I place him as an argument against the intellectual philosophies of any and every man.[c]

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observations, run their ships high and dry upon the shore? Would you put out the lamp in your house because moths and millers burn their wings in it? What would the children do?'—*H. W. Beecher.*

*b Cawdray.*

"In all societies it is advisable to associate, if possible, with the highest; not that the highest are always the best, but because, if disgusted there, we can at any time descend; but if we begin with the lowest, to ascend is impossible."—*Colton.*

*c H. W. Beecher.*

**31—35.** (31) **Elam,** *see v.* **7.** (33) **Hadid,** or Harid.[a]

*Good people in every church.*—There is not a height on the loftiest Apennine on which there is not some blossom which the winter frost has not nipped, some floweret which the hurricane has not blasted. There is no desert without an oasis. And so there is not a church or a communion under heaven in the bosom of which there are not here and there some witnesses that God has not utterly forsaken it.[b]

*a* So it is given in some copies.

*b Dr. Cumming.*

**36—39.** (36) **the priests,** exactly as in Neh.[a] **Jeshua,** head of ninth course.[b] (37) **Immer,** sixteenth course.[c] (38) **Pashur.**[d] (39) **Harim,**[e] third course.

*Duties of a bishop.*—

You should, my lord, be like the robes you wear,
Pure as the dye, and, like that revered shape,
Nurse thoughts as full of honour, zeal, and purity;
You should be the hour-dial, and direct
The king with constant motion ; be ever beating,
Like to clock-hammers on his iron heart.
To make it sound clear ; and to feel remorse,
You should unlock his soul, awake his dead conscience,
Which, like a drowsy sentinel, gives leave
For sin's vast army to beleaguer him :
His ruin will be ask'd for at your hands.[f]

*The ministry of the Church.*—What men are officially appointed to do they often do from mere habit or a sense of duty. Accord-

**the priests**

*a* vii. 39—42. "These coincidences show with what accuracy the names and nums. of the priests were reckoned."—*Bp. Wordsworth.*

*b* 1 Ch. xxiv. 11.

*c* 1 Ch. xxiv. 14.

*d* Jer. xx. 1, xxi. 1 ; 1 Ch. ix. 12.

*e* 1 Ch. xxiv. 8.

*f Rowley.*

"The distant village clock struck midnight, min-

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gling, as it were, with the ever-pealing tone of ancient Eternity. The limbs of my buried ones touched cold on my soul; I walked silently through little hamlets, and close by their outer churchyards, where crumbled up cast coffin-boards were glimmering, while the once bright eyes that had lain in them were mouldered into grey ashes. Cold thought I clutch not like a cold spectre at my heart. I look up to the starry sky, and an everlasting chain stretches thither, and over, and below; and all is life, and warmth, and light, and all is godlike, or God." —*Richter.*

"Men say their pinnacles point to heaven; why, so does every tree that buds, and every bird that rises as it sings. Men say their aisles are good for worship; why, so is every mountain glen and rough sea shore. But this they have as distinct and indisputable glory, —that their mighty walls were never raised, and never shall be, but by men who love and aid each other in their weakness."— *Ruskin.*

*g H. W. Beecher.*

ingly, children are often led to feel that their parents govern them because it is their duty to do it. And there come exigencies in children's lives when they are impatient of authority at home, and when, if they are sent away from home to school, they will take the same amount of government patiently, without resistance. A person outside of the family can sometimes influence a child when its parent can exert but little influence upon it. And there are a multitude of instances where laymen can do what no minister can. The minister is a professional man, and people say, "His attention to me is not an evidence of his personal sympathy for me, but a matter of business." I stand here on Sunday, and preach to men, and my influence upon them is diminished by the fact that I am appointed to do it. They say, "He is hired, and the message which he delivers to us is not his own message of love. He is paid, and he labours among us on that account." A man at the bank hands you the money for your cheque. It is ten thousand dollars, and it is going to save you from bankruptcy. But you do not account him a benefactor. You express not a word of gratitude to him. He is the cashier; you hand him the cheque, and he pays you the money; he does not care for you, and you do not care for him. It is his business to hand you the money, and he does it, and that is all there is of it. And so men seem to think of a minister, salaried and appointed to stand in the pulpit and dispense the Gospel, that he does it professionally and as a matter of course. A business friend whose life is consistent, and whom you believe to be a good man, comes to you and says, "My friend, I do not believe anybody will tell you what you ought to know; but the fact is, you are becoming hard and selfish; you are becoming sharp and grasping. I feel it, and your friends all feel it. Probably nobody would have said this to you if I had not, and I never told it to a soul but you, and I never would have said it to you if I had not been your friend. Now do not be angry with me, but just think about it." He will give heed to him. But if I should go to you with like message, saying, "Sir, do not you know that you are getting very worldly and very hard?" you would think to yourself, "Oh, yes, my minister gets a good salary, and feels that he has a duty to perform;" but what effect would it have? When a man who is not paid a salary to teach you your duty, and whom you do not expect to do it, comes to you and concerns himself in your welfare, there is a freshness about it that does not belong to mere professional service. The general feeling of men is, "Let every one take care of his own business." It is very hard to tell a disagreeable truth to a friend; and when a man makes the self-sacrifice to do it, you feel it. And so an officer can help an officer as a minister cannot; a business man can help a business man as a professional man cannot; a poor man can do what a rich man cannot; an ignorant man can do what a learned man cannot. There is not a man, though he is not a minister, that has not power to accomplish great results in this way. There is an opening for laymen to do this work that can be filled by none but such.*g*

**the Levites singers and porters**

40—42. (40) **Levites,** "their office being more mechanical and material than that of the priests; they seem to have declined in religious zeal and earnestness."*a* **Hodaviah,** or *Judah,*[b]

*a Bp. Words-*

called also Hodevah.[c] (41) **an . . eight,** or 148.[d] (42) **an . . nine,** or 138.[e]

*Church music.*—When the poet Carpani inquired of his friend Haydn. how it happened that his church music was always so cheerful, the great composer made a most beautiful reply. "I cannot," he said, "make it otherwise. I write according to the thoughts I feel; when I think upon God, my heart is so full of joy that the notes dance and leap. as it were, from my pen; and since God has given me a cheerful heart, it will be pardoned me that I serve Him with a cheerful spirit."

**43—48.** (43) **Nethinims,** appointed by David to aid the Levites.[a] (44) **Siaha,** or *Sia.* (46) **Shalmai,** or *Shamlai.*

*True worship.*—

Resort to sermons, but to prayers most:
Praying's the end of preaching. O be drest!
Stay not for the other pin; why thou hast lost
A joy for it worth worlds. Thus hell doth jest
Away thy blessings, and extremely flout thee,
Thy clothes being fast, but thy soul loose about thee.

In time of service seal up both thine eyes,
And send them to thy heart, that, spying sin,
They may weep out the stains by them did rise;
Those doors being shut. all by the ear comes in.
Who marks in church-time others' symmetry,
Makes all their beauty his depravity.

**49—54.** (50) **Nephusim,** or *Nephishesim.* (52) **Bazluth,** or *Bazlith.*[a]

*Straggling from the church.*—Standing one day before a beehive, Gotthold observed with delight how the little honey-birds departed and arrived, and from time to time returned home laden with the spoils of the flowers. Meanwhile a great yellow hornet—that wolf among the bees—came buzzing up in eager quest of prey. As it was eventide, and the bees, after the heat of the day, had settled about the mouth of the hive to breathe the cool air, it was amusing to observe that their fierce adversary lacked courage to attack their combined host and serried ranks. True, he often advanced for the purpose, but, seeing how densely and compactly they were sitting. was forced to retreat empty-handed. At last, a bee, somewhat belated, arrived by itself; and on this straggler he instantly seized, fell with it to the earth, and dealt with it at his pleasure.[b]

**55—60.** (55) **the . . servants,** prob. Canaanitish labourers, whom Sol. employed,[a] and who had bec. proselytes. In some places[b] they seem to be included in the Nethinims. **Peruda,** or *Perida.*[c] (57) **Ami,** or *Amon.*[d] (59) **Tel-melah, Tel-harsa,** names of Chaldæan cities. **Addan,** or *Addon.*[e] **they . . house,** hence their claim, like that of the priests, stood over till it could be settled by authority.[f] **seed,** pedigree.

*How to destroy a church.*—To do this effectually. you must—I. Discourage the pastor. II. Discourage your fellow-members. III. Destroy the confidence of the community. I. To discourage the pastor—1. Absent yourself from one service every Sabbath, or miss at least one in three—if he is not very strong. once in four times may answer; 2. Neglect the prayer and class meetings; 3. Criticise your minister freely; praise him sparingly;

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*worth,* who adds, "there is a warning to the Church in the latter days."

*b* iii 9.

*c* Ne. vii. 43.

*d* Ne. vii. 44.

*e* Ne. vii. 45.

**the Nethinims, etc.**

*a* 1 Ch. ix. 2.

In 1848, Lamartine introduced De la Eure to the riotous populace, saying, "Listen, citizens! It is sixty years of a pure life that is about to address you." The multitude all became attentive to his words. It was the power of integrity and purity.

*a* Ne. vii. 54.
*b Scriven.*
"The Church was built to disturb the peace of man; but. often, it does not perform its duty for fear of disturbing the peace of the Church. What kind of artillery practice would that be which declined to fire for fear of kicking over the gun-carriages, or waking up the sentinels asleep at their posts?"—*Beecher.*

**the children of Solomon's servants**

*a* 1 Ki. ix. 20, 21; 2 Ch. viii. 7, 8.

*b* Ne. iii. 26, **31,** x 29.

*c* Ne. vii. 57.

*d* Ne. vii. 59.

*e* Ne. vii. 61.

*f v.* 63.

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find fault plentifully; pray for him little or none; 4. If he proposes to hold extra meetings withhold your co-operation; 5. Give yourself no concern whether his salary is paid or not; 6. Never call on him socially, or allow him to think that his comfort or that of his family is a matter of any importance in your eyes. II. To discourage your fellow-members—1. Observe the directions given above; 2. Complain about everything they do and don't do; 3. Contrive to make yourself the head of a clique, and by their assistance and your own industry keep the church in hot water generally; 4. While doing this, lose no opportunity to complain of the bad treatment you are receiving; 5. Be as much like Diotrephes and as little like Paul as you can; 6. Discard charity and candour, take distrust to your bosom, and make scheming your specialty. III. To destroy the confidence of the community—1. Observe the foregoing directions; 2. Tell the people that you are in the church by force of circumstances, but have no respect for the way in which business is conducted; 3. Publish the faults of your brethren, taking care to magnify them; 4. Make no effort to induce people to attend the church; 5. Take no part in the labours of the Sunday school; 6. Publish it on all occasions that you have no confidence in the concern—predict that it must fail—go down—blow up—never can succeed. By observing these directions faithfully, you may have the satisfaction, if the church is not unusually vigorous, of witnessing the fulfilment of your predictions.

*Quarrels in a church.*—Any physician will tell you that if there be fever in the body, if the pulse be 120 instead of 70 or 80, the body will waste and pine away. If there be the fever of ceaseless quarrels and disputations about little crotchets in a church or congregation, instead of growing it will decline; instead of advancing in its majestic mission, it will positively decay, until it die out, a suicide, having turned the weapons that ought to have been combined against the foe, against its own bosom and into its own heart.[g]

The Albigensian war, in the beginning of the thirteenth century, commenced with the storming of Beziers, and a massacre in which fifteen thousand persons, or, according to some accounts, sixty thousand, were put to the sword. Not a living soul escaped, as witnesses assure us. It was here that a Cistercian monk, who led on the Crusaders, being asked if the Catholics were to be distinguished from heretics, answered, "Kill them all! God will know His own."

"Am I have not forgotten what the inside of a church is made of, I am a peppercorn, a brewer's horse." — *Shakespeare.*

g *Dr. Cumming.*

**61—63.** (61) **Habaiah,** prob. their ancestor mar. one of the house Barzillai, the Gileadite.[a] (62) **sought,** this shows their anxiety to be found among the children of Israel. **register,** *i.e.* the register called "the enrolled." (63) **Tirshatha,** Persian for "governor." Here Zerubbabel is meant; a title also given to Nehemiah.[b] **should . . things,** the priest's portion.[c] **stood . . Thummim,**[d] by wh he would try them, and pronounce them of the line of Aaron or otherwise.

the children of the priests

a 2 Sa. xvii. 27, xix. 32—39; 1 Ki. ii. 7.

Are we as anxious that our names should be in the Lamb's Bk. of Life, written in heaven? See Mal. iii. 16.

b Ne. viii. 9, x. 1, xii. 26.

c Le. xxii. 2, 10, 15, 16.

d Ex. xxviii. 30; Nu. xxvii. 21.

*Joining the church.*—Do men go to school because they know so much, or because they know so little? Do men go to a physician because they are sick, or do they wait until they are well, and then go? Yet to hear people speak of uniting with the church one would suppose that they thought it their duty to stay out till they were perfect, and then to join it as ornaments. They who are weak, but who wish strength; they who are ignorant, but hunger for knowledge; they who are unable to go alone, and need sympathy and society to hold them up; they who are lame, and need crutches; in short, they who know the plague and infirmity of a selfish heart, a worldly nature, a sinful life, and who desire above all things to be lifted above them, have a preparation for the Church! If you could walk without limping, why use a crutch at all! If you are already good

"The Church has a good stomach; she has swallowed down whole

enough, why go into a church? But if you are so lame that a staff is a help, so infirm that company and ordinances will aid you, then you have a right to the fellowship of the church. To unite with a church is not to profess that you are a saint, that you are good, and, still less, that you are better than others. It is but a public recognition of your weakness and your spiritual necessities. The church is not a gallery for the better exhibition of eminent Christians, but a school for the education of imperfect ones, a nursery for the care of weak ones, a hospital for the better healing of those who need assiduous care.[e]

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countries, and has never known a surfeit; the Church alone can digest such ill-gotten wealth."—*Goethe.*

*e H. W. Beecher.*

**total number of the people**

**64–67.** (64) **the . . threescore,**[a] the total of those who came to Jerus., and prob. counted there. (65) **two . . women,** or 245.[b] (66, 67) **horses,** *etc.*, same as in Neh.[c] Beasts of burden to carry baggage: the vessels, and offerings, etc.

*Stragglers from the church.*—There are stragglers in the church as well as in the army, who fall out of the ranks and are lost. Sometimes they follow the regiment for days, by the ashes of its camp-fires, and subsist as best they can on the charity of the people, and the scraps left by those in camp. They sleep anywhere, or where night overtakes them. Three such from a Minnesota regiment have just arrived, after an absence of two weeks. They fell out of the ranks from sickness and exhaustion, and were thenceforth most truly wayfarers. They dodged guerillas, they slept in the brush, they feasted on the food left in deserted camps, and finally reached a point where they could obtain transportation to their regiment. Stragglers are not always thus fortunate. One found his way, by the aid of a stranger, into the hospital at Sedalia. He was dying even then, and could not give his name or regiment. He was a mere boy, and unequal to the toil of marching. He was wet and cold and weary, and in a few hours died; and we buried him in a nameless grave, thinking of the fond hearts that far away would bleed for tidings of him, the absent, the missing one, never, alas! to return to them.[d]

*a* Ne. vii. 66.

*b* Ne. vii. 67.

"Now had the childr. of Israel taken down their harps fr. the willows of Babylon, and could sing unbidden the songs of Sion."—*Bp. Hall.*

*c* Ne. vii. 68, 69.

"The way to preserve the peace of the Church is to preserve the unity of it."—*M. Henry.*

*d Army Correspondent.*

**the offerings of the people for the work**

**68–70.** (68) **some . . fathers,** names and gifts diff. fr. Neh.'s acc.[a] **when . . Lord,** *i.e.* to the site on wh. it was to be built. (69) **drams,** Heb. *darcemonim.* A Pers. gold coin. (70) **all Israel,**[b] those who returned, and those whom they found in the land. **in . . cities,** prob. allotted to them by public authority.[c]

*Gifts to the Church.*—The gifts of poverty are the richest gifts to the churches. I refer not now to the widows' mites, richer though they be than all the gifts of wealth, but to the gifts richer even than the widow's mite. A few years ago, on a wintry morning, a boy in the habiliments of poverty entered an old school-house among our western mountains, and avowed to the master his desire for an education. There was poverty, laying one of her richest gifts on the altar of religion. For that boy was Jonas King. On his humble shoemaker's bench Carey laid the foundation of British Baptist Missions. John Newton found in his congregation an unfriended Scotch boy, whose soul was then glowing with new-born love to Christ. He took him to see John Thornton, one of those noble merchants whose wealth, whose piety, and whose beneficence increase together. They educated him, and that boy became Claudius Buchanan,

*a* Neh. vii. 70–72. The differ. shows the independence of the lists. See *Ld. A. Hervey* in *B. D.* ii. 492.

*b* Ne. vii. 73.

*c Bertheau.*

Use churches as you do hotels—not to live in, but to take your food and refreshment in, on your way to your Father's house. The Father's house is the only place that is fit for the permanent abidance of

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the soul. And while I would dissuade you from the life of the scoffer, and the scarcely less respectable life of the indifferent man, I beseech of you, do not narrow and demean yourself so much as to feel that any sect or denomination is as big as you need, or that you can find all you want in it.

whose name India will bless when the names of Clive and Hastings are forgotten. John Bunyan was a gift of poverty to the Church. Zwingle came forth from an Alpine shepherd's cabin; Luther from a miner's cottage; the Apostles, some of them, from fishermen's huts. These are the gifts of poverty to the Church.[d]—*The glory of the Church in tribulation.*—Looking from the little wooden bridge which passes over the brow of the beautiful waterfall of Handeck, on the Grimsel, one will at a certain hour of a bright day be surprised to see a rainbow making an entire circle, surrounding the fall like a coronetof gems, or a ring set with all the brilliants of the jeweller. Every hue is there—

> "In fair proportion, running from the red
> To where the violet fades into the sky."

We saw two such bows, one within the other. and we fancied that we discovered traces of a third. We had looked upon such a sight but once before, and were greatly delighted with "that arch of light, born of the spray, and coloured by the sun." It was a fair vision to gaze upon, and reminded us of the mystic rainbow which the seer of Patmos beheld, which was round about the throne, for it strikes us that it was seen by John as a complete circle, of which we see but the half on earth; the upper arch of manifest glory we rejoice to gaze upon, but the lower and foundation arch of the eternal purpose, upon which the visible display of grace is founded, is reserved for our contemplation in another world. When we read in the first verse of the tenth chapter of Revelation, "I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head," it greatly assists the imagination to conceive of a many-coloured circlet, rather than a semicircle. We lingered long watching the flashing crystal, dashed and broken upon a hundred craggy rocks, and tossed into the air in sheets of foam, to fall in wreaths of spray; we should not have tired for hours if we could have tarried to admire the harmonious hues of that wheel within a wheel,

> "Of colours changing from the splendid rose,
> To the pale violet's dejected hue;"

but we were on a journey, and were summoned to advance. As we mounted our mule and rode silently down the pass, amid the pine forests and the overhanging mountains, we compared the little stream to the Church of God, which in peaceful times flows on like a village brook, quiet and obscure, blessed and blessing others, but yet little known or considered by the sons of men. Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, are greater than all the waters of Israel, and the proud ones of the earth despise that brook which flows "hard by the oracle of God," because her waters go softly and in solitary places; but when the Church advances over the steeps of opposition, and is dashed adown the crags of persecution, then, in her hour of sorrow, her glory is revealed. Then she lifts up her voice, like the sea, and roars as a boiling torrent, quickening her pace till that mighty river, the river Kishon, sweeps not with such vehemence of power. Her sons and daughters are led to the slaughter, and her blood is cast abroad, like the foam of the waters, but onward she dashes with

*d Dr. J. Harris.*

"The truth is, when we are under any affliction, we are generally troubled with a malicious kind of melancholy; we only dwell and pore upon the sad and dark occurrences of Providence, but never take notice of the more benign and bright ones. Our way in this world is like a walk under a row of trees, checkered with light and shade; and because we cannot all along walk in the sunshine, we therefore perversely fix only upon the darker passages, and so lose all the comfort of our comforts; we are like froward children who, if you take one of their playthings from them throw away all the rest in spite." —*Bp. Hopkins.*

"In thy silent wishing, thy voiceless unuttered prayer, let the desire be cherished not

irresistible energy, fearing no leap of peril; and then it is that the eternal God glorifies her with the rainbow of His everlasting grace, makes the beauty of her holiness to shine forth, and, in the patience of the saints, reveals a heavenly radiance, which all men behold with astonishment. The golden age of true religion is the martyr period; war breeds heroes, and suffering unto blood in striving against sin draws forth men of whom the world is not worthy. So far from enduring loss by opposition, it is then that the cause of God receives its coronation. The rainbow of the Divine presence in the fulness of majesty encircles the chosen people when tribulation, affliction, and distress break them, as the stream is broken by the precipitous rocks adown which it boldly casts itself, that its current may advance in its predestined channel. When, at any time, our forebodings foretell the coming of evil times for the Church, let us remember that before the Spirit revealed to the beloved disciple the terrible beasts, the thundering trumpets, the falling stars, and the dreadful vials, He bade him mark with attention that the covenant rainbow was round about the throne. All is well, for God is true.[e]

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that afflictions may not visit thee; for well has it been said, such prayers never seem to have wings. I am willing to be purified through sorrow, and to accept it meekly as a blessing. I see that all the clouds are angels' faces, and their voices speak harmoniously of the everlasting chime."—*Mrs. L. M. Child.*

*e C. H. Spurgeon.*

## *CHAPTER THE THIRD.*

**1—3. (1) when .. come,** *Tisri.*[a] The chief of the Heb. religious year. (2) **Jeshua,** the high priest.[b] **Zerubbabel,** the governor.[c] **and .. altar,** their first act. The foundations not yet laid.[d] (3) **bases,** on its old foundations. **fear .. countries,** hence they would first propitiate Jehovah, who had so often defended and delivered their ancestors.

*The temple begun.*—I. The foundation laid. The first care of the returned exiles was to re-establish the worship of God. As soon as they regained their own land, they began to observe the yearly feasts and daily sacrifices (*vv.* 3, 4). They longed to see God's worship restored to its former splendour, and so resolved to rebuild the temple. See—1. Their zeal: no difficulties disheartened or deterred them; 2. Self-sacrifice: each gave freely of money and means to a work so sacred. II. The shout of the young, and the tears of the aged. The young looked onward; the aged recalled the past. As the aged recalled what the temple was in their young days, their cries all but drowned the shouts of the young. The young hoped that Israel might recover the former glory. Learn:—(1) Make the worship and glory of God your first care; (2) Count no sacrifice too great to promote His glory; (3) Enter with joy into God's worship; whatever regrets the past may cause, the future may be blessed.[e]

*Security of the Church.*—

With stately towers and bulwarks strong,
Unrivalled and alone,
Loved theme of many a sacred song—
God's holy city shone.

Thus fair was Zion's chosen seat,
The glory of all lands;
Yet fairer, and in strength complete,
The Christian temple stands.

**the altar is set up**

*a* On the *first* was the holy convocation—Nu. xxix. 1; on the *tenth*, the feast of atonement—Nu. xxix. 7; on the *fifteenth*, the feast of tabernacles—Nu. xxix. 12.

*b* ii. 2.

*c* ii. 2.

*d v.* 6.

A man is converted, and he comes into the church. He is fit to be in the church because he is so bad, and has found it out. For a man that is lame in the leg, and half blind, and deaf, and without the power of digestion—is not he just the man that ought to be in the hospital, if he knows what his condition is, and wants to get well?

*e Hive.*

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"It is best to be with those in time that we hope to be with in eternity."—*Fuller.*

The faithful of each clime and age
This glorious Church compose;
Built on a Rock, with idle rage
The threat'ning tempest blows.

Fear not; though hostile bands alarm,
Thy God is thy defence;
And weak and powerless every arm
Against Omnipotence.

**feasts kept, and offerings made**

*a* Ex. xxiii. 16.

*b* Num. xxviii. 3, 11, 19, 26, xxix. 2, 8, 13.

*c* 1 Ki. v. 9, 10; 2 Ch. ii. 10—15.

*v.* 4. *W. Jay,* "The work of the day to be done in the day."—*Sh. Disc.* iii. 180.

*d C. Wesley.*

"The company in which you will improve most will be least expensive to you."—*Washington.*

**4—7.** (4) **as . . written,** acc. to the prescribed rules of observance.[a] **as . . required,** *Heb.* "the matter of the day in his day." Nothing omitted one day, or put off till to-morrow. (5) **afterward . . offering,**[b] *etc.*, Ex. xxix. 38. (6) **from . . day,** commencing, and going through the sacred month in order. **but . . laid,** they did not wait for the building, bef. they beg. the worship; for God dwelleth not (exclusively) in temples made with hands. (7) **unto . . Tyre,** thus imitating Solomon.[c] **according . . Persia,** *see* vi. 3, 4.

*The Gospel Church.*—

See the Gospel Church secure,
And founded on a Rock;
All her promises are sure;
Her bulwarks, who can shock?
Count her every precious shrine;
Tell, to after ages tell—
Fortified by power Divine,
The Church can never fail.[d]

**foundations of the temple are laid**

*a* 1 Ch. xxiii. 24.

*b* ii. 40.

It is remarkable that one of the Levites should be named Henadad = the grace of Hadad, a deity of Syria: hence Benhadad.

*c* ii. 69.

*d* 1 Ch. vi. 31, xvi. 4, xxv. 1.

*v.* 10. *J. Doughty, Analic. Sac.* 340.

*v.* 11. *W. Corbin, A Ser.* 1695.

*vv.* 11—13. *Bp. Wilberforce, Sers. on sev. occas.* 188.

*e C. Simeon, M.A.*

The Lord's Church is bigger than any church that men's hands ever formed

**8—11.** (8) **from . . upward,** this was David's rule.[a] **set . . Lord,** they would overlook the masons, etc. (9) **Jeshua, a** Levite.[b] **Judah,** or *Hodaviah.* (10) **apparel,** dressed in their official robes.[c] **after . . Israel,**[d] taking David's rule for the service, as Sol.'s for the building. (11) **sang . . course,** an antistrophical chaunt. One portion of the singers rendered one part, and then the rest answered.

*The rebuilding of the temple.*—That an exuberance of joy and of sorrow should be excited at once by the same event, is undoubtedly a curious fact; and it will be profitable to show you—I. What there was at that time to call forth such strong and widely different emotions. This work was—1. To some, an occasion of exalted joy; 2. To others, an occasion of the deepest sorrow. That this subject is not uninteresting to us, will appear whilst I show—II. How far similar emotions become us at this day. 1. Certainly there is at this time great occasion for joy; 2. Yet there is among us abundant occasion for grief also. See, then—(1) What, above all things, should interest our souls; (2) What use we should make of our knowledge and experience.[e]

*Thankfulness.*—At a dinner given by a member of Parliament in the north of Scotland, the health of the electors was proposed. When the cheers had subsided, a hint was given to an aged elector that he should return thanks. Wholly unacquainted with all the world beyond his native glen, he hesitated for some time, but was at length prevailed upon to rise, when, lifting his hands, and closing his eyes, he returned thanks, not in a florid political harangue, but in a strain of devout and pious gratitude to God for all His mercies. The worthy old man knew nothing of the phrase "returning thanks" in the public sense of the

term, but construed it into the act of returning thanks after meat.—*Worship.*—The sound of casual footsteps had ceased from the abbey. I could only hear, now and then, the distant voice of the priest repeating the evening service, and the faint responses of the choir; these paused for a time, and all was hushed. The stillness, the desertion, and obscurity that were gradually prevailing around, gave a deeper and more solemn interest to the place—

> "For in the silent grave no conversation,
> No joyful tread of friends, no voice of lovers,
> No careful father's counsel—nothing's heard,
> For nothing is, but all oblivion,
> Dust, and an endless darkness."

Suddenly the notes of the deep-labouring organ burst upon the ear, falling with doubled and redoubled intensity, and rolling, as it were, huge billows of sound. How well do their volume and grandeur accord with this mighty building! With what pomp do they swell through its vast vaults, and breathe their awful harmony through these caves of death, and make the silent sepulchre vocal! And now they rise in triumphant acclamation, heaving higher and higher their accordant notes, and piling sound on sound. And now they pause, and the soft voices of the choir break out into sweet gushes of melody; they soar aloft, and warble along the roof, and seem to play about these lofty vaults like the pure airs of heaven. Again the pealing organ heaves its thrilling thunders, compressing air into music, and rolling it forth upon the soul. What long-drawn cadences! What solemn sweeping concords! It grows more and more dense and powerful—it fills the vast pile, and seems to jar the very walls—the ear is stunned—the senses are overwhelmed. And now it is winding up in full jubilee—it is rising from the earth to heaven—the very soul seems rapt away and floated upwards on this swelling tide of harmony.[f]

**12, 13.** (12) **ancient,** aged. **that .. house,** wh. had been destroyed 52, or at most 59 yrs. bef. **wept,** tears caused by contrast betw. (1) prosperous circumstances in wh. foundats. of first temple were laid, and present reduced state of country; (2) inferior size and cost of stones;[a] (3) smaller extent of foundation, etc.;[b] (4) the comparative smallness of present means; (5) and esp. bec. of absence of ark, Shekinah, etc. **many .. joy,** these prob. the younger, comforted by Haggai.[c] (13) **so .. people,** the Eastern's expressions of emotion are always loud and vehement.

*The sad memories of the aged, and the joyousness of the young.*—I. Why did the aged weep? 1. In part, because of the poor preparations made for building this house as compared with those for building the first house; 2. Because of the absence of many things that were the glory of the temple at the first. II. Why do the young rejoice? 1. It was the gladness of patriotism: the temple was the centre of the nation; the manifester of the nation's growth, the fountain of law, and the instrument of progress; 2. It was the gladness of piety; to such it was a proof of the return of the Divine favour. Learn—(1) How variously the same event may affect different minds; (2) Not to misjudge manifestations of feeling that differ from our own.

*The past, the present, and the future.*—As it may fall out, it is

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There is no wall that can contain the Church of God on earth, and there is no sect-line that can reach around it. The Lord's garment is large enough to cover all sects, and to leave room for nations to camp under it besides.

'Association is the delight of the heart not less than of poetry. Alison observes that an autumn sunset, with its crimson clouds, glimmering trunks of trees, and wavering tints upon the grass, seems scarcely capable of embellishment. But if in this calm and beautiful glow the chime of a distant bell steal over the fields, the bosom heaves with the sensation that Dante so tenderly describes."—*Willmott.*

[f] *W. Irving.*

**the joy and mourning of the people**

[a] 1 Ki. vii. 9, 10.

[b] Hag. ii. 3.

[c] ii. 9.

"Here is an apt emblem of everything, however joyous, which is done in the Ch. militant on earth. Her march of victory is through a vale of tears; her restorations are memorials of sins wh. caused the destruction of that wh. had been dissolved.

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Even when she celebrates the glories of the Incarnation of Christ who made our nature to be a temp. of the Godhead, she may not forget to weep for the ruin into wh. the temp. of that nature fell by sin."—*Bp. Wordsworth.*

some degree of misery to have been happier. Every abatement of the degrees of our former height, lays siege to our thankfulness for lesser mercies. Sometimes it proves an advantage to have known no better. He shall more comfortably enjoy present benefits who takes them as they are, without any other comparisons than the weakness of his own deservings. It is nothing to me what myself or others have been, so I be now well. Neither is it otherwise in particular churches. If one be more gloriously built than another, yet if the foundation be rightly laid in both, one may not insult the other, may not repine; each must congratulate the truth to the other, each must thankfully enjoy itself.[d]—*Varieties in melancholy.*—Of the melancholy of common life there are two species that have but little resemblance. There is a sullen gloom which disposes to unkindness and every bad passion; a fretfulness in all the daily and hourly intercourse of familiar life, which, if it weary at last the assiduities of friendship, sees only the neglect which has forced and not the perversity of humour which gave occasion to it, and soon learns to hate, therefore, what it considers as ingratitude and injustice; or which, if friendship be still assiduous as before, sees in these very assiduities a proof, not of the strength of that affection which has forgotten the acrimony to soothe the supposed uneasiness which gave it rise, but a proof that there has been no offensive acrimony to be forgotten, and persists therefore in every peevish caprice till the domestic tyranny becomes habitual. This melancholy temper, so poisonous to the happiness not of the individual only but of all those who are within the circle of its influence, and who feel their misery the more because it may perhaps arise from one whom they strive, and vainly strive to love, is the temper of a vulgar mind. But there is a melancholy of a gentler species, a melancholy which, as it arises, in a great measure, from a view of the sufferings of man, disposes to a warmer love of man this sufferer, and which is almost as essential to the finer emotions of virtue as it is to the nicer sensibilities of poetic genius.[e]

*v.* 12, *Noah Hill*, 143.

*d Bp. Hall.*

"Whatever is highest and holiest is tinged with melancholy. The eye of genius has always a plaintive expression, and its natural language is pathos. A prophet is sadder than other men; and He who was greater than all prophets was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief."—*Mrs. L. M. Child.*

*e Dr. T. Brown.*

## *CHAPTER THE FOURTH.*

B.C. 535.

**the proffered help of the adversaries**

**1—3. (1) adversaries,** Samaritans.[a] **captivity, or "of the migration."** (2) **since .. Assur,** son of Sennacherib.[b] (3) **ye .. God,**[c] their offer rejected, as they did not profess the true faith, nor adhere to the pure and holy worship.[d] They would be safe, though they were slow. Many such hands would mar the work. Their real temper is soon seen.

*The declaration of the adversaries.*—A very interesting explanation of this passage has been recently obtained from the Assyrian sculptures. On a large cylinder, deposited in the British Museum, there is inscribed a long and perfect copy of the annals of Esar-Haddon, in which the details are given of a large deportation of Israelites from Palestine, and a consequent settlement of Babylonian colonists in their place. It is a striking confirmation of the statement made in this passage. Those Assyrian settlers intermarried with the remnant of Israelite women, and their descendants, a mongrel race, went under the name of Samaritans. Though originally idolaters, they were instructed in the know-

*a v* 10, see on 2 Ki. xvii. 24.

*b* 2 Ki. xix. 37; 2 Chr. xxxiii. 11.

*c* Ne. ii. 20.

*d* 2 Ki. xvii. 3, 24—34.

*vv.* 1—5. *Luke Melbourne* (1683).

"Malice scorned, puts out itself; but argued gives a kind of credit to a false accusation."—*Massinger.*

ledge of God, so that they could say, "We seek your God;" but they served Him in a superstitious way of their own.

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**4—6.** (4) **then . . building,** this proves that Zerubbabel was right in rejecting their help. Their conduct shows that their offer of aid was a pretence. (5) **counsellors,** intriguing men to spread evil reports. Prob. bribed others at the Persian court. **all . . Persia,**[a] till 7 yrs. aft. return of Jews. **even . . Persia,**[b] *i.e.* during the time of Smerdis, succ. of Cambyses, to time of Darius Hystaspes. (6) **Ahasuerus,** prob. Cambyses;[c] some say Xerxes.

*The crafty architect.*—It is recorded of an architect of the name of Cnidius, that having built a watch-tower for the king of Egypt, to warn mariners from certain dangerous rocks, he caused his own name to be engraved on a certain stone in the wall, and then having covered it with plaster, he inscribed on the outside, in golden letters, the name of the king, as though the thing was done for his glory. He was cunning enough to know that the waves would ere long wash away the coat of plastering, and that then his own name would appear, and his memory be handed down to successive generations. How many there are who, while affecting to seek only the glory of God and His Church, are really seeking whatever is calculated to gratify self-love. Could the outer coat, as it were, of their pretences be removed, we should see them, as they really are, desirous not of God's glory but of their own.[d]

**their false accusations**

*a* Cyrus was engaged in war with the Lydians and Scythians at the time. He died B.C. 529. He left the gov., while at his wars, in the hands of his wicked son, Cambyses, who was hostile to the Jews. See *Jos. Ant.* xi. 2, 1.

*b* Darius, son of Hystapes: raised to throne B.C 521, on death of Pseudo Smerdis.

*c Ussher, Jahn, Prideaux, Rosenmuller, Ewa'd, Dr. W. Smith, Dr. Pusey.*

*d Illus. of Truth.*

**7—10.** (7) **Artaxerxes,** here arta = great (as in Arta-banes, etc.). Herodotus[a] renders the word great warrior. Xerxes[b] seems to be an appelative = warlike. **companions,** societies. Bislam, etc. were prob. deputy-governors. **Syrian,** Aramæan, called Chaldee sometimes in our version. (8) **chancellor,** *lit.* master of judgment. **scribe,** secretary. (9) **then wrote,** *etc.*, to vi. 18 this bk. is now in Chaldee.[c] **Dinaites,**[d] prob. fr. city of Media. **Apharsathchites,** a tribe of Medo-Persia. **Tarpelites,** per. fr. E. of Elymais. **Apharsites,** Persian origin. **Archevites,**[e] fr. Babylonia. **Susanchites,** fr. Susa. **Dehavites,** Dâi.[f] **Elamites,** fr. Elymais. (10) **Asnapper,** prob. one of the officers of Esarhaddon,[g] kg. of Assyria.

**their letter to Artaxerxes**

*a* vi. 98.

*b* "The Ahasuerus of Book of Esther is Xerxes, son of Darius."—*Bp. Wordsworth.*

*c* Prob. Ezra copied it from some collection of Chaldee records.

*d* 2 Ki. xvii. 30, 31.

*e* Ge. x. 10.

*f* See *Herodotus*, i. 125.

*g* 2 Ki. xix. 37.

*The alarm bell of Atri.*—At Atri a great bell hung in the market-place, which, whenever wrong was done to any man, his was the privilege to ring for justice. The days sped happily at Atri; it was a peaceful hamlet in Abruzzo, and there were not many wrongs to right, and the rope at last was worn away. But leaves and tendrils of a vine had grown upon it, and they

"Hung like a votive garland at a shrine."

A poor old horse, half starved and thin, turned upon the highway by a knight who had no gold for provender, barked at by the dogs, and torn by brier and thorn, sought food wherever it could be found. Grazing near the tower he saw the hempen rope with the vine entwined about it, and began to tug at leaf and sprig until there sounded out upon the sleepy town the accusing bell. The proclamation of the king was made in answer to this appeal, and the poor steed was cared for from that day.

"In consequence of the difficulties and obstacles thus interposed, for a period of 20 yrs., the progress of the work was very slow."—*Port. Com.*

**11—13.** (11) **thy . . river,** *i.e.* W. of the Euphrates. (12) **building . . city,** which was not true. They were building the temple

**the purport of the letter**

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simply. **set up,** *lit.* finished. **joined,** *lit.* sewed together. (13) **then . . custom,** they turn prophets as well as false witnesses. **thou . . kings,** so these men say who were themselves to aid in the building.[a]

*The weapons of the Church.*—The Romans in a great distress were put so hard to it, that they were fain to take the weapons out of the temples of their gods to fight with them; and so they overcame. This ought to be the course of every true Christian in times of public distress,—to fly to the weapons of the Church, prayers and tears. The Spartans' walls were their spears; the Christian's walls are his prayers.[b]—*The Highland chief, M'Gregor.*—There is a touching fact related in history of a Highland chief of the noble house of M'Gregor, who fell wounded by two balls at the battle of Preston-pans. Seeing their chief fall, the clan wavered, and gave the enemy an advantage. The old chieftain, beholding this effect of his disaster, raised himself up on his elbow, while the blood gushed in streams from his wounds, and cried aloud,—"I am not dead, my children; I am looking at you to see you do your duty." These words revived the sinking courage of his brave Highlanders. There was a charm in the fact that they still fought under the eye of their chief. It roused them to put forth their mightiest energies, and they did all that human strength could do to turn and stem the dreadful tide of battle. And is there not a charm to thee, O believer, in the fact that you contend in the battle-field of life under the eye of your Saviour?

**14—16.** (14) **we . . palace,** *lit.* "we are salted with salt of the palace." Allu. prob. to E. "covenant of salt."[a] (15) **so . . find,** *etc.*, not a word do they say of the more recent decree of Cyrus that might also be found there. A part of the truth is sometimes the worst lie. (16) **we certify,** *etc.*, this certainly shows that the position of Jerusalem was regarded as strong and influential.

*Salted with salt, etc.* (*v.* 14).—Literally. "salted with the salt of his palace." Some have supposed that the words refer to their receiving a stipend from the king of Persia, which was wont to be paid in salt; others suppose it expresses an acknowledgment that they were preserved by that king's protection, as flesh is preserved by salt. And many pieces of collateral learning are introduced to embellish these conceits. It is sufficient, to put an end to all these conjectures, to recite the words of a modern Persian monarch, whose court Chardin attended some time about business. "Rising in wrath against an officer, who had attempted to deceive him, he drew his sabre, fell upon him, and hewed him in pieces at the feet of the grand vizier, who was standing, and whose favour the poor wretch courted by this deception. And looking fixedly upon him, and the other great lords that stood on each side of him, he said with a tone of indignation, 'I have then such ungrateful servants and traitors as these to eat my salt. Look on this sword, it shall cut off all these perfidious heads.'"[b]

**17—22.** (17) **sent,** *etc.*, see on *v.* 7. (18) **hath . . me,** its sense has been explained. (19) **search . . found,** *etc.*, their charge being so far confirmed, it is admitted in other respects. (20) **mighty kings,**[a] *etc.*, as Solomon. (21) **give . . until,** *etc.*, the building to be stayed until a special permission were

**a** So the Jews pretended zeal for the imperial power of Rome, when they would destroy the Lord of the temple.—Lu. xxiii. 2; Jo. xix. 12.

*b Spencer.*

"Not alone to know, but to act according to thy knowledge, is thy destination,—proclaims the voice of my inmost soul. Not for indolent contemplation of and study of thyself, nor for brooding over emotions of piety,—no, for action was existence given thee; thy actions, and thy actions alone, determine thy worth."—*Fichte.*

**they request the search of the records**

*a* 2 Ch. xiii. 5. They regarded themselves bound to him, as solemnly as by rite of hospitality. "Eating a prince's salt" is an Oriental phrase, equivalent to "receiving maintenance fr. him."

*v.* 15. *J. Anderson, A Ser.* 1714.

"Malice sucks up the greatest part of her own venom, and poisons herself."—*Montaigne.*

*b* Vol. iii. p. 149.

**the decree of Artaxerxes**

*a* 1 Ki. iv. 21; Ps. lxxii. 8; Gen. xv. 18; Jos. i. 4.

granted. (22) **take . . this,** *etc.*, they are called on, in the king's name, to see to this.

*Formalities in church.*—Many churches are like conservatories, in which the members are like a flower in a flower-pot. There it is in the flower-pot, and it cannot get out. And little sticks are put down beside it to keep it in a particular position. And every branch that attempts to go beyond a given point is instantly snipped off, in order that the flower may assume an ideal shape. And the members of many churches are like geraniums trained for show, tied up and constrained in root and branch and stem. There are thousands of people in churches that sit around in their respective rows, and take whatever nourishment is dealt out to them, and grow in just the shape as prescribed for them by those that have them in charge, and have no voice in determining what kind of structure shall be made of them.[b]

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*Formalist.*—"His house is as empty of religion as the white of an egg is of savour."—*Bunyan.*

"O ceremony, show me but thy worth! Art thou aught else but place, degree, and form, creating fear and awe in other men?"—*Shakespeare.*

*b H. W. Beecher.*

**23, 24.** (23) **cease . . power,** most prob. a display of armed force. (24) **then . . Jerusalem,** no doubt they continued to pray and worship. **ceased . . Persia,** *i.e.* fr. ab. 8 yrs., see *v.* 5.[a]

*Hindrances to religious enterprises.*—I. We are here reminded of some of the hindrances that arise from sectarian jealousies, and also from sectarian rivalries. II. We are also reminded of the undue timidity of some orders in holy causes. Learn—(1) To take heed how we hinder the work of religion; (2) How we suffer ourselves to be intimidated.

*Definition of a church.*—

A band of faithful men
Met for God's worship in some humble room,
Or screened from foes by midnight's starlit gloom,
On hill-side or lone glen,
To hear the counsels of His holy Word,
Pledged to each other and their common Lord.

These, few as they may be,
Compose a church, such as in pristine age
Defied the tyrant's steel, the bigot's rage;
For, when but two or three,
Whate'er the place, in faith's communion meet,
There, with Christ present, is a church complete.

**the work of building ceases**

*a* Darius asc. throne of Persia B.C. 521.

The Rev. James Owen of Shrewsbury, being asked, when on his death-bed, whether he would have some of his friends sent for to keep him company, replied, "My fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ; and he that is not satisfied with that company doth not deserve it."

## *CHAPTER THE FIFTH.*

B.C. 520.

**1, 2.** (1) **Haggai**[a] **. . Zechariah,**[b] *see* intros. to their bks. **prophesied . . them,** if there were foes, there were also friends and comforters. (2) **prophets . . them,** and their words were a great help.

*The revival of the work.*—It was conducted under the guidance of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah. I. Consider the arguments they employed. 1. They drew attention to the contrast between their own dwellings and the house of God; 2. They were reminded of the mind of God as marked by the dearth that had been sent; 3. They gave the promise of the greater glory of the second temple. II. Consider the effects of the arguments they used. 1. The revived religious faith of the nation; 2. The progress and completion of the work. III. Some practical lessons which may be fairly inferred from this part of sacred history.

**Haggai and Zechariah incite the people to renew their work**

*a* Hag. i. 1.

*b* Zech. i. 1.

*Bp. Hall, Contemp., Zerubbabel and Ezra.*

*v.* 2. *J. Billingsley, Ser.* 1706.

You never can tell, by looking at

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birds'-tail feathers, which is going to fly highest; and you cannot tell by looking at churches, and their ordinances, and their outside apparatus, which is going to take the lead. I tell you, that Church which has, first, the most power with God, and then, next, the most sympathetic power with men, is the truest Church.

*c Christian Index.*

"Bad company is like a nail driven into a post, which, after the first and second blows, may be drawn out with little difficulty; but being once driven up to the head, the pincers cannot take hold to draw it out, but which can only be done by the destruction of the wood."—*St. Augustine.*

*d C. H. Spurgeon.*

We learn—(1) The great forbearance of God; (2) It is clear what God thinks of those who are at ease in Zion.

*A dead Church.*—When Napoleon I. invaded Egypt he encountered a force ensconced in a mud fort that effectually defied all his efforts to reduce it. If it had been built of rock, he could have blown it up with powder, or shivered it with artillery; if it had been wood he could have fired it with rockets: but it was a huge mass of mud, in which his iron missiles stuck fast, and rather increased than diminished its powers of resistance. He therefore left the place in despair, and turned his attention to more practical operations.[d] Now what this mud fort was to the Egyptian soldiery, a cold, dead Church is to the world of ungodly men. They are effectually protected behind this mass of carnality, and utterly defy all the moral artillery of the Gospel. The heavenly missiles stick fast in this intervening obstacle, and never reach their mark.[c]—*Communion of saints.*—What the circulation of the blood is to the human body, that the Holy Spirit is to the body of Christ which is the Church. Now, by virtue of the one life-flood, every limb of the body holds fellowship with every other, and as long as life lasts that fellowship is inevitable. If the hand be unwashed, the eye cannot refuse communion with it on that account; if the finger be diseased the hand cannot, by binding a cord around it, prevent the life-current from flowing. Nothing but death can break up the fellowship; you must tear away the member, or it must of necessity commune with the rest of the body. It is even thus in the body of Christ; no laws can prevent one living member of Christ from fellowship; with every other; the pulse of living fellowship sends a wave through the whole mystical frame; where there is but one life, fellowship is an inevitable consequence. Yet some talk of restricted communion, and imagine that they can practise it. If they be alive unto God they may in mistaken conscientiousness deny their fellow-Christians the outward sign of communion, but communion itself falls not under any rule or regulation of theirs. Tie a red tape round your thumb and let it decree that the whole body is out of fellowship with it; the thumb's decree is either ridiculously inoperative, or else it proves injurious to itself. God has made us one, one Spirit quickens us, and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus; to deny fellowship with any believer in Jesus is to refuse what you must of necessity give, and to deny in symbol what you must inevitably render in reality.[d]

**Tatnai, etc., cannot hinder the Jews**

*a* vi. 6.

*b* Prob. this is not a question, but an answer to it, *i.e.* "We told them the names." If this is the sense, it shows they were not ashamed or afraid.

*c* vii. 6, 28; Ps. xxxiii. 18.

**3—5.** (3) **Tatnai,**[a] gov. of Syria. (4) **names,** *etc.*,[b] they are anxious to make the charge more specific and personal. (5) **eye . . cease,**[c] He guided them by His eye. Looked favourably. **till . . matter,** they not only continued the work, but also provided for future interruptions, and prepared their defence.

*A pruned Church.*—It is the pruned Church, liked the pruned vine, that bears the most precious clusters; it is the crushed soul, like the crushed aromatic plant, that is the most fragrant. The harp of David reserves its sweetest notes for dirges, and the pencil of the Holy Spirit draws its brightest pictures on a dark ground. He who is a stranger to suffering is a stranger to the depths of Divine mercy, to the heights of Divine promise, to the riches of religious joy. Man never appears more glorious than when the prophet stands among lions. It is true greatness, says

Seneca, to have in one the frailty of man and the security of God. Hence persecution is spoken of as a gift: "Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake;" and the prediction of suffering is in the clear words of the Master: "In the world ye shall have tribulation."[d]

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*d J. A. James.*

**their letter to Darius against the Jews**

6—8. (6) **Tatnai,** *v.* 3. **Shethar-boznai,** shining star. (7) **unto . . peace,** yet what troublers these men were. (8) **house . . God,** the Samaritans had spoken of the city: these govs., of the temple. **great stones,** *lit.* "stones of rolling."[a]

*The beginnings of letters in the East.*—The people of the East are always very particular as to the way in which they commence a letter. Thus, they take into consideration the rank of the individual to whom they write, and keep in view also what is their object. "To you who are respected by kings." "To him who has the happiness of royalty." "To the feet of his excellency, my father, looking towards the place where he is worshipping, I write." A father to his son says, "Head of all blessings, chief of life, precious pearl." When people meet each other on the road, they say, "*Salam*, peace to you." Or, when they send a message, or ask a favour, it is always accompanied by a *salam*.[b]

*a* An allu. prob. to the method of removing stones of very large size.

"Ceremonies are different in every country; but true politeness is everywhere the same."—*Goldsmith.*

*b Roberts.*

9—12. (9) **asked,** *etc.*, they enter into the minutest details. (10) **we . . names,** *see* on *v.* 4, marg. (11) **God . . earth,** Jehovah no local deity. The one God over all. **build,** rebuild. **great . . builded,**[a] Solomon. (12) **after . . wrath,**[b] they attribute their national ruin not to the prowess of their foes but to the anger of God. **Nebuchadnezzar,** 2 Ki. xxiv. 2, xxv. 8, 9, 11.

*a* 1 Ki. vi. 1.

*b* 2 Ch. xxxvi. 16, 17.

*Churches are holy witnesses.*—

How beautiful they stand,
Those ancient altars of our native land!
Amid the pasture-field and dark green woods,
Amid the mountain's cloudy solitudes;
By rivers broad that rush into the sea;
By little brooks that, with a lapsing sound,
Like playful children, run by copse and lea!
Each in its little plot of holy ground,
How beautiful they stand,
Those old grey churches of our native land!

Our lives are all turmoil;
Our souls are in a weary strife and toil,
Grasping and straining—tasking nerve and brain,
Both day and night, for gain!
We have grown worldly—have made gold our god—
Have turned our hearts away from lowly things;
We seek not now the wild flower on the sod;
We seek not snowy-folded angels' wings
Amid the summer skies—
For visions come not to polluted eyes!

Yet blessed quiet fanes!
Still piety, still poetry remains,
And shall remain, whilst ever on the air
One chapel-bell calls high and low to prayer—
Whilst ever green and sunny churchyards keep

As the head of the woman is the man; and as the head of a man is his highest part, the seat of beauty, wisdom, will, judgment, authority, intelligence; so is Jesus Christ the head of His Church—her beauty of holiness, her source of life, wisdom, unity, law, peace, power, prosperity; without whom she could be no Church. The world has been deluged with books on the evidences of Christianity; what the world needs is not books on these evidences but men who are proofs of them. When, instead of such books, it shall have lives on the evidences of religion, lives perfumed with the odour of holiness, lives that

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The dust of our beloved, and tears are shed
From founts which in the human heart lie deep!
Something in these aspiring days we need
To keep our spirits lowly,
To set within our hearts sweet thoughts and holy!

And 'tis for this they stand,
The old grey churches of our native land!
And even in the gold-corrupted mart,
In the great city's heart,
They stand; and chantry dim, and organ sound,
And stated services of prayer and praise,
Like to the righteous ten which were not found,
For the polluted city, shall upraise
Meek faith and love sincere—
Better in time of need than shield and spear![c]

**13—17.** (13) **Cyrus . . Babylon,** C. dwelt in B. in that year.[a] (14, 15) **and the vessels,** *etc.*, see i. 7, 8. (16) **Sheshbazzar**[b] (*? fire-worshipper;* or, *deliverance of light*), the Chaldæan name of "the Prince of Judah," or Zerubbabel. **and . . finished,** might have been, perh., but for the hindrances. (17) **search . . treasure house,** in place of the treasures there would be the decree of Cyrus explaining the absence of the golden vessels. **decree . . Cyrus,** they refer the king to a later decree than the one their enemy had quoted.

*The House of the Rolls.*—An idea of the form of this Babylonian register-house, as well as the manner of preserving public records within its repositories, can be obtained from the recent discoveries at Nineveh. Two small chambers were discovered in the palace of Konyunjik, which, from the fragments found in them, Mr. Layard considers as "a house of rolls." After reminding his readers that the historical records and public documents of the Assyrians were kept on tablets and cylinders of baked clay, many specimens of which have been brought to this country, he goes on to say, "The chambers I am describing appear to have been a depository in the palace of Nineveh for such documents. To the height of a foot or more from the floor they were entirely filled with them; some entire, but the greater part broken into many fragments, probably by the falling in of the upper part of the building. They were of different sizes; the largest tablets were flat, and measured about 9 in. by 6½ in.; the smaller were slightly convex, and some were not more than an inch long, with but one or two lines of writing. The cuneiform characters on most of them were singularly sharp and well defined, but so minute in some instances as to be almost illegible without a magnifying glass. These documents appear to be of various kinds. The documents that have thus been discovered "in the House of the Rolls" at Nineveh probably exceed all that have yet been afforded by the monuments of Egypt, and when the innumerable fragments are put together and transcribed, the publication of these records will be of the greatest importance to the history of the ancient world.

will adorn and recommend the designs of the Church, it is more likely to be captivated into subjection to the reproofs of the Spirit."—*Dr. T. W. Jenkyn.*

"You may depend upon it that he is a good man whose intimate friends are all good."—*Lavater.*

*c L. E. Landon.*

*a Xenophon, Cyrop.* viii. 7. Artaxerxes also is called king of B., Neh. xiii. 6, and king of Assyria, Ezra vi. 22.

*b* i. 8.

Cunning lawyers do sometimes quote old Acts of Parliament, as if they had not been annulled by more recent statutes.

"It is a joy to me to know that the Christians within the communion of this church are not all the Christians to be found in the congregation. We are richer than we appear to be. Here are growing pear trees, apple trees, cherry trees, and shrubs, and blossoming vines, and flowers of every hue and odour; but I am glad that some seeds have been blown over the wall, and that fruit trees and flowers most pleasant to the eye are springing up there also."—*Beecher.*

## CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

B.C. [illegible]

**Darius finds and enforces the decree of Cyrus**

**1—5.** (1) **Darius,** *i.e.* D. Hystaspes.[a] **house . . rolls,** or *books.* **laid up,** *lit.* "made to descend."[b] (2) **Achmetha,** Ecbatana. (3) **height,** *etc.*, not only was it found that permission had been granted to build the temp., but even the size was specified. (4) **let . . house,** and the charges were to be defrayed out of the royal exchequer. (5) **let . . vessels,** as already stated (i. 7. 8. v. 14). Thus ends the decree of Cyrus.

*Achmetha.*—The Ecbatana of classical, the Hamadan of modern times, at the foot of the Elwund range of hills, where, for its coolness and salubrity, Cyrus and his successors on the Persian throne established their summer residence. There was another city, however, of this name, the Ecbatana of Atropatene, and the most ancient capital of Northern Media, and recently identified by Colonel Rawlinson in the remarkable ruins of Takht-i-Soleiman. Yet as everything tends to show the attachment of Cyrus to his native city, the Atropatenian Ecbatana, rather than to the stronger capital of Greater Media, Colonel Rawlinson is inclined to think that he deposited there, in his var or fortress, the famous decree relating to the Jews, along with the other records and treasures of his empire.

a Great and interesting light has been thrown on the history of this monarch and the transactions of his reign, by the decipherment of the Cuneatic inscriptions on the rocks of Behistun.

b These treasure chambers were underground. Hence many of the anc. cylinders have been found under the ruins by Layard, etc.

**Tatnai is exhorted by the king to aid the work**

**6—10.** (6) **now,** here begins the order of Darius to Tatnai. **be . . thence,** from your suspicions and hindrances. (7) **let . . alone,** save in the way of helping. **let . . Jews,** Zerubbabel. (8) **moreover,** in addition to this decree of Cyrus, or in enforcement of its spirit. (9) **let . . fail,** without the omission of a day, without abatement of a single jot. (10) **pray . . life,**[a] these heathen men had some belief in Jehovah, and in the power of prayer.[b]

*Sermon on the king's accession.*—We propose to consider the words before us—I. As the desire of a heathen prince. 1. It was a just and reasonable; 2. It was a wise and political desire. II. As the duty of a Christian people—1. It is your duty, the discharge of which is to your interest; 2. To the performance of which we have an especial call; 3. To obey which we are under a special obligation. Learn—(1) From the example of this heathen prince how to employ our influence; (2) How to improve the privileges we enjoy.[c]

*Idolatry is a denial of God.*—Every act of idolatry, by the worship of anything that is not God, is a denial of the true God, even by those who profess to believe in the true God. This is evident, not only from the general language of Scripture, which teaches us that men may know God, but "in works deny Him," and may believe in God, and yet, by neglect of domestic duties, "deny the faith, and be worse than an infidel;" but particularly by that remarkable passage of Job xxxvi. 28. We deny, therefore, the God that is above, and consequently both the Father and the Son, not only by avowed atheism and deism, or Socinianism, but by acts of worship, such as kissing the hand, and bowing the knee in prayer to images, relics, saints, or angels, or anything that is not God."[d]

a 1 Ti. ii. 1, 2.

b "Here was a foreshadowing of the time when all nations would be admitted to worship the one True God." Is. ii. 2; Mal. i. 11.

*v.* 10. *J. Mede*, i. 482; *Dr. M. Hole*, i. 286; *T. Rogers*, i. 376.

c *C. Simeon, M.A.*

"As a countenance is made beautiful by the soul's shining through it, so the world is beautified by the shining through it of a God."—*Jacobi.*

d *Bp Burgess*

**11—15.** (11) **that . . word,** *etc.*, a warning to the meddling Samaritans. **hanged,**[a] lifted up, *i.e.* crucified. **dung hill,**[b]

**the penalty of disobedi-**

B.C. 519.

draught-house. (12) **God . . there,**[c] Darius regarded Jehovah as a local deity. (13) **so . . speedily,** suggestive of the power of the despotic monarchs of the time. (14, 15) **finished,** *etc.*, decree of Darius, received in 4th yr. of his reign. B.C. 518.[d] **Artaxerxes,**[e] *i.e.* Longimanus, who came to the throne in B.C. 465.

*The subserviency of a faithful ministry to the erection of God's spiritual temple.*—We shall offer a few remarks upon—I. The building of the temple through the instrumentality of the forementioned prophets. 1. Many difficulties obstructed the progress of the work: 2. Through the preaching of the prophets, however, these difficulties were overcome. The history thus viewed leads us naturally to notice—II. The subserviency of a faithful ministry to the erection of God's spiritual temple. The erection of this—1. Is attended with the same difficulties; 2. Is carried on and perfected by the same means.[f]

"*And being set up*" (*v.* 11).—Lud. de Dieu observes that there is no proper construction in the words which we render, *and being set up;* he would therefore translate them, after the Seventy, "and standing, let him be beat upon it," or "whipped," as the manner was among the Persians and other nations. Among the Jews, they who were beaten did not stand, but lay down (Deut. xxv. 2). If a greater punishment be here meant, then he makes the first words refer to the wood, and the latter to the man. "And from above, let it fall upon him;" that is, the stake being lifted up, shall be stuck into his body, and come out at his fundament. This was a cruel practice among the Eastern people, and is yet continued there.[g]

**16—18.** (16) **rest . . captivity,** sons of the transportation. **kept . . joy,**[a] those who wept at the foundation must have nearly all died. (17) **according . . Israel,** Israel and Judah united in the intention of this second temp. (18) **divisions,** 1 Chr. xxiv. 1. **courses,** 1 Chr. xxiii. 3. **as . . Moses,**[b] Num. iii. 6, viii. 9, 10.

*The building completed.*—I. The temple finished. The Jews had met with opposition in carrying out their great work; they at times almost despaired of its accomplishment; but it appears that the plans of their foes tended to further the work. God overrules the designs of men to promote His glory. II. The dedication. Compare this with that of the first temple, 2 Chr. vi. Whatever was absent, here was—1. A grateful people ready to rededicate themselves to God; 2. The spiritual presence of God consecrating and accepting their work. Learn:—(1) Fear no difficulty or opposition in God's works: patience, prayer, and labour will be successful; (2) Look not so much for outward signs of God's approval as for the answer of a good conscience.[c]

*The different effects of the same events.*—How different is the most joyful day on earth from its triumph in heaven. This motley scene is an emblem of what will happen amidst the Church's greatest prosperity and triumph on earth. Many weep while many rejoice. We must expect a mixture of joy and sorrow in this world. Let us learn to weep as though we wept not, and to rejoice as though we rejoiced not; and long for that day when the spiritual temple shall be finished, when the top-stone shall be laid with rejoicing, and not one weeping eye or sorrowful heart shall be found in all the general assembly of the Church of the First-born in heaven.[d]

**ence to this decree**

*a* A com. punishment among the Persians. Est. ii. 23, vii. 9, ix. 13; *Herodotus*, iii. 125, iv. 43, vii. 194.

*b* 2 Ki. x. 27.

*c* "Darius, the K., saith, If thou hidest this decree, and dost not publish it to the people, may Auramazda destroy thee, and thy house perish." — From a cuneiform inscrip. set up by Darius at Behistûn.

*d* Zech. vii. 5. See *Prideaux*, i. 257.

*e* Artax. did much to adorn the temp., and hence —though it was finished under Darius — he is (as Michaelis observes) justly commemorated here.

*f C. Simeon, M.A.*

*g Burder.*

**the joyful dedication of the temple**

*a* Prob. they sung Ps. cxlvi., cxlvii., cxlviii., called in the LXX. Ps. of Hag. and Zech.

*b* Although David arranged the priests and Levites in courses acc. to their fams., it was Moses who assigned to them their rights, privileges, stations, and duties.

*c Hive.*

*d J. Orton.*

"Nations and men are only the best when they are the gladdest, and deserve heaven when they enjoyit."—*Richter.*

19—22. (19) **and . . month,**[a] *i.e.* the month after the temp. was finished. (20) **purified,** 2 Chr. xxx. 15. (21) **all . . themselves,**[b] by undergoing the indispensable rite of circumcision. (22) **for . . joyful,** the cause of their prosperity rightly traced. **turned . . them,**[c] the hearts of all in God's hands.

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**the passover is observed**

*a* Ex. xii. 6.

*b* ix. 11.

*A true Church.*—What magnificent churches we have for the wealthy. They occupy expensive corner plots: they are built of granite or fine stone, painted with costly and exquisite taste; they are upholstered with the softest and sleepiest of cushions, and when they are finished, these words are cut on the portal: "The poor have the Gospel preached to them." I often think of the wag who saw such an inscription over such a door, and who with a piece of chalk wrote underneath, "Yes, but not here." Now, I do not believe that this is exactly the form of Christianity which the Master would approve of if He were to come into this city. Not that I doubt that rich men need preaching. I think that Christ, instead of occupying this splendid pulpit, would stand out yonder on the steps, and get the crowd about Him—the rich and the poor in the same audience. Now I am told that rich men like to be exclusive. They have elegant houses, and they want to worship God elegantly. I don't believe it. Wealth is sometimes purse-proud and conceited; but the great majority of rich men in this city would be glad to see sitting by his side the clerk on a small salary, and the carpenter and the mason. Given good behaviour and cleanliness, it is a good thing to have a silk gown in one pew and a calico one in another.[d]—*The Church to care for the whole man.*—You know that there is a new-fangled modern doctrine, that the Church is bound to take care of its own subjects, and not go out of itself to meddle with other subjects. That is, in my judgment, as if the sun should take counsel with itself, and say, "Here am I, a splendid old sun, and I have got to take care of my light: everything depends on me, and it will not do for me to compromise myself, and go into that deep valley, into that dark cave, or into that obscure thicket. My business is to keep bright, and take care of myself." What kind of a sun would it be that should talk thus? But you will find ministers and churches talking in the same way. They say, "It is the business of the Church to take care of religion." Did Christ die for religion, or did He die for man? I had always supposed that the business of the Church was to take care of men. Suppose a mother should say, "My business is to take care of maternal and filial love, and not of my children!" She would exhibit the same wisdom that you see in churches and ministers when they declare that it is their business to take care of religion. Why, it is the most hideous form of selfishness out of hell—this attempt of a great moral institution, that is set to be the light of the world, and the teacher of men in every visible relation in life, and that is ordained to lay the law of God on thought and feeling and conduct, to draw back from its great work, and say, "It is not our business to take care of these things." It is a fundamental apostasy. It is egregious recreancy. And that dark-lantern Church that shines on nothing outside, and only on that which is inside of itself, does not belong to Christ. Who owns it, I do not pretend to say![e]

"Surely the church is a place where one day's truce ought to be allowed to the dissensions and animosities of mankind."—*Burke.*

*c* Pr. xxi. 1.

*d Hepworth.*

There is the same difference between the Church and religion that there is between the hand and the soul. The hand is important, and I do not propose to cut it off; but if it is a choice between the hand and the soul, I know which I should choose. Now, churches, and seminaries, and Christian institutions of all kinds, are feet with which religion walks. They are hands with which it helps itself. They are instruments which God employs in carrying it forward. But when a comparison is made between institutions or ordinances, and the things which they serve, there is no question which is superior.

*e H. W. Beecher.*

B.C. 457.

Ezra goes up to Jerusalem

Betw. this cp. and the last is a period of 58 yrs., during wh. reigned Xerxes (who suc. Darius), fr. B C. 486—465., X. was suc. by Artaxerxes Longimanus.

In this interval the Bk. of Esther falls.

*a* Killed at Riblah, 130 yrs. bef. 2 Ki. xxv. 18—21.

*b vv.* 21—26. "Communion with God is a mystery to most; every one that hangs about the court doth not speak with the king; all that meddle with holy duties, and, as it were, hang about the court of heaven, hath not communion with God: it is only the new creature enjoys God's presence in ordinances, and sweetly converses with Him, as a child with a father."—*T. Watson.*

## CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

**1—6.** (1—5) **Ezra** (*helper*), *see* intro. **son of Seraiah,**[a] grandson, or great-g.son. (6) **this Ezra**, he speaks of himself in 3rd person: *see vv.* 27, 28. **went . . Babylon**, authorised by the king.[b] **and . . scribe,** quick in understanding, and bold in expressing, the meaning of the law. **and . . request,** his zeal in wishing to go, and the kindness of the king, to be both noted.

*The setting out of Ezra.*—We are once more reminded—I. Of the unchangeableness of God's purposes of mercy. II. Of the ease with which great obstacles are overcome, when God arises in the greatness of His strength. III. That God proceeds on the principle of vindicating His own name, and is not affected alone by the characters of men. IV. Of our journey home to the heavenly Jerusalem, and our safety on the march.

*Trusty servants.*—A proprietor of a large business house selected for his cashier one whom he could trust. "Here is the safe," he said; "in it are the books of the establishment, which contain all needed information regarding our business and mode of working. In the morning I will give you the key, and show you the combination of its wards, which will open the safe without delay." The cashier had no thought of entering upon his duties without the key in his hand, and the necessary knowledge concerning it in his head. Just so ought the Christian to do his Master's will; but it takes some of us a long time to learn the necessity of common sense here. Jesus has said: "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." We must use this key of prayer, if we would succeed in any work the Lord places before us. It is certainly very simple, yet we waste time, and sin against God, by trying in vain to open the safe in some way of our own. Oh, how much of unbelief is there in all we do! How much it grieves the Almighty Father, when we pretend to rely upon His arm, and are all the time trying to make our own weakness answer the purpose!

**7—10.** (7) **went up,** *etc.*, *see* ch. viii. (8) **fifth month,** the month Ab.[a] It was the end of July. **which . . year,**[b] B.C. 458. (9) **began . . up,** *etc.*, hence a journey of 4 mos. Caravans travel slowly, esp. such as this, with poor people, women, and children, etc. (10) **for Ezra,** *etc.*, this shows us the reason of his request.

*The Christian ministry.*—The text points out some indispensable qualifications for an able minister of the New Testament. I. Devotedness to God's Word. 1. The minister is called to this; it is the indispensable requirement of his office; 2. Its inexhaustible riches require profound and constant research; 3. Prayer is absolutely necessary for the right understanding of the Scriptures. II. Personal religion. 1. Without this, all other qualifications will prove unavailing; 2. Its influence on the minister's own heart and life is necessary to his success; 3. Its power over others. III. Public instruction. 1. Its subjects: Scripture, God in Christ, sin, salvation; 2. Its spirit: dependent on Divine aid, faithful, bold; 3. Its manner: simple, unaffected, earnest, practical, affectionate.—*Man's duty in relation to God's*

his arrival at Jerusalem

*a* 1st and 2nd temps. destroyed on the month Ap. Some say on the same day, see Zech. viii 19; *Allen's Judaism*, 401.

*b* See *Browne, Ordo Saeclorum*. 380; *Pusey on Dan.* 168. "Ezra's reigning desire had been to study the Divine law—its principles, institutions, privileges, and re-

*redemptive truth.*—I. He has to learn it—1. With devout earnestness: 2. With persevering diligence. II. He has to practise it. 1. The doing of it is essential to a thorough understanding of it; 2. The doing of it is necessary, in order to be really benefited by it. III. He has to preach it. 1. Life preaching is most intelligible; 2. The most incontrovertible; 3. The most constant. 4. The most Christ-like. Here is a work for us all to do. Learn—Practise, preach the Bible. The last can only be done by those who have accomplished the first and second.[c]

*Holy courage.*—Bernard de Palissy, a native of Agen, in France, was a maker of earthenware, at Saintes, and distinguished himself by his knowledge and talents. He composed a number of scientific and practical works, which have been repeatedly republished; and the last edition, in 1777, is enriched with notes by the celebrated Faujas de St. Fonds. This able and worthy man was a Calvinist, and the French king, Henry III., said to him one day, that "he should be compelled to give him up to his enemies, unless he changed his religion." "You have often said to me, sire," was the undaunted reply of de Palissy, "that you pitied me; but as for me, I pity you, who have given utterance to such words as, I shall be compelled. These are unkingly words; and I say to you in royal phrase, that neither the Guises, nor all your people, nor yourself, are able to compel a humble manufacturer of earthenware to bend his knee before statues." Bernard was a man of humour, as well as of courage; he would sometimes say, alluding to his trade, and his trust in Providence, "My only property is heaven and earth."

**11—13.** (11) **now . . letter,** written in Caldee. (12) **king of kings,** prob. an Orientalism = great and powerful prince:[a] but many of his tributary princes still retained the title of kings. (13) **I . . decree,** *etc.*, this was a royal permit, a free conduct. None were to be compelled to go, and none to be hindered who desired to go.

*Postage of letters.*—The postage of letters, so essential to the purposes of commercial intercourse, and which now forms so important a branch of the public revenue, was first established in the short reign of Richard the Third. The plan was originally formed in the reign of his brother, Edward, when stages were placed at the distance of twenty miles from each, in order to procure Edward the earliest intelligence of the events that passed in the course of the war with the Scots; but Richard commanded in the expedition, and it was principally owing to his sagacity and talents that the merit of the post ought to be attributed, particularly as during his reign it was established over the principal part of the kingdom. The revenue of the Post Office in the reign of Queen Anne was only £60,000; in 1761, it was £142,000; in 1769, £300,000; in 1794, 445,600; in 1800, £745,000; in 1806, £1,108,840; and in 1813, £1,414,224. About the year 1730 to 1740, the post was only transmitted three times a week from Edinburgh to London; and one day it brought but a single letter, which was for Sir William Pulteney, the banker; in 1790, the letters from Edinburgh averaged twelve hundred daily. The remittances from Scotland to the Post Office in the ten years preceding 1770 only averaged £9,500: but from the year 1790 to 1800, the annual average amounted to £51,500. The Twopenny Post Office was established in 1683. It was originally planned

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quirements: and now fr. love and zeal, he devoted himself, as the business of his life, to the work of instructing, reforming, and edifying others."—*Port. Com.*

c *Dr. Thomas.*

*v.* 10. *A. Fuller, Wks.* 682; *E. P. Watson,* 143.

"Cato the elder, when somebody was praising a man for his foolhardy bravery, said that there was an essential difference between a really brave man and one who had merely a contempt for life."—*Plutarch.*

**the king's commission to Ezra**

*a* As heaven of heavens = great and the highest heaven; and vanity of vanities—greatest vanity. A cuneiform inscrip., discov. at Susa, begins:—"Thus speaks Artaxerxes, the great king, the king of kings, the king of the countries, the king of the earth, the son of King Darius."

"The measure wh. this document authorised, and the remarkable interest in the Jews displayed in it, were most prob. owing to the influence of Esther, who is thought to have been raised to the high position of queen a few months previous

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to the departure of Ezra."—*Hales. v.* 10. *A. Fuller, wks.* 682; *E. P. Waters*, 143.

*b Percy Anec.*

by a Mr. Povey, author of the now obsolete pamphlet, entitled *The Virgin of Eden, with the Eternity of Hell Torments.* He formed the design of conveying letters by messengers to different parts of the city and its environs; for some time he executed his plan with much approbation, and was distinguished by the title of the "Halfpenny Carrier." The ministers finding the plan too lucrative for a private subject, laid an injunction on the inventor, restraining him from carrying it on any longer; and, without giving him any compensation, took it into their own hands.[b]

**the king sets forth Ezra's work**

*a* Est. i. 14.

*b* "Granting him a free collection, and what he can get and gather by it."—*Bp. Richardson.*

*c Coverdale.*

"I should say sincerity, a deep, great, genuine sincerity, is the first characteristic of all men in any way heroic."—*Carlyle.*

**14—17.** (14) **sent . . king,** *lit.* fr. bef. the king, *i.e.* with royal authority. **and . . counsellors,** who "saw the king's face."[a] Note the confidence reposed in Ezra. **according . . hand,** the limit of Ezra's commission. (15) **whose . . Jerusalem,** heathen notion of localised deity. (16) **and . . find,**[b] as free contributions of the people. (17) **speedily,** diligently,[c] and sufficiently.

*God's estimate of our faith.*—God's watchful and tender regard for man's weak faith is finely illustrated by the following incident. A swallow having built its nest upon the tent of Charles V., the emperor commanded that the tent should not be taken down when the camp removed, but should remain till the young birds were ready to fly. The soldier's gentle regard for the trustful bird may fairly teach us something of God's matchless tenderness for all such as venture to put their trust in Him. He that buildeth his nest on a Divine promise shall find it abide and remain till he shall fly away to the land where promises are lost in fulfilments.

**and grants him means for executing it**

*a* viii. 25—27.

*b* i. 7—11.

"A crust of God's carving is better than a banquet of our own providing."—*Beadle.*

"How just is Providence in all its works! How swift to overtake us in our crimes!"—*Lansdowne.*

*c Ingram Cobbin, M.A.*
Birds cannot converse with men unless they had a rational nature put into them, nor can men converse with God unless, being made new creatures, they partake of he Divine nature.
*a Percy Anec.*

**18–20.** (18) **whatsoever,** *etc.*, happy the king who sees that what his people do "after the will of" their God, will be for the general good. (19) **vessels,**[a] these were dif. from those previously taken.[b] (20) **more . . needful,** after making the collection. Here was confidence in the integrity of Ezra.

*God's providence acknowledged.*—The Jews begin nothing without an *if God*, or *if* THE NAME (meaning God) *will*. And it was a saying of Ben Syra, a distinguished Jew, "Let a man never say he will do anything before he says, 'if God will.'" So Cyrus, king of Persia, when, under the pretence of hunting, he designed an expedition into Armenia, upon which a hare started and was seized by an eagle, said to his friends, "This will be a good and prosperous hunting to us, if God will." So Socrates says, "But I will do this, and come unto thee to-morrow, if God will" (Xenophon's *Cyropædia*, l. ii. c. 25; Plato in *Alcibiades*, p. 135). And it is reported of the Turks that they submit everything to the Divine will, as the success of war, or a journey, or anything of the least moment they desire to be done; and never promise themselves or others anything, but under this condition, *In Shallah*, that is, "if God will."[c]—*George Buchanan.*—This illustrious scholar, compelled to fly from his own country by the blood-seeking animosity of a priestly cabal, whose vices he had made the theme of his satire, sought refuge and protection under Henry VIII. of England. His appeal to that monarch was couched in terms of great pathos and elegance. "Look not," said the poet, "with an unrelenting countenance upon the humble advances of a man whose soul is devoted to your service; one

who, a beggar, a vagrant, and an exile, has endured every species of misfortune which a perfidious world can inflict. A savage host of inveterate enemies pursues him, and the palace of his sovereign resounds with their menaces. Over mountains covered in snow, and valleys flooded with rain, I come a fugitive to the Athenian altar of mercy, and, exhausted by calamities, cast myself at your feet." Alas! London was not the Athens the fugitive sought, nor Henry the Pericles whose generosity was to succour him. But who can wonder that, after sacrificing to the axe that beauty on which he once reposed with delight, neither the misfortunes of greatness, nor the eloquence of genius, should have been able to make the least impression on the heart of the savage Henry.[d]

**21—23.** (21) **decree . . speedily,** the king fulfilled his word royally. (22) £22,000 acc. to silver talent of Babylon. (23) **why . . wrath,** the disasters[a] of the nation were attributed to the anger of the gods.

*Unlimited grace.*—I. As salt was used for its preserving and purifying properties it may be regarded as an emblem of grace in the soul. II. As the king gave salt to Ezra without limiting the quantity, so the King of kings gives unlimited grace to His people. III. We can have large measures of many things without being necessarily benefited. IV. As salt kills reptiles, so grace kills sins.[b]—*The decree of Artaxerxes.*—To make a due improvement of the words before us we shall consider them—I. In reference to the Jewish Church. The state of that Church at this time is not unlike to that in which it was in the days of Ezra,—but to us is given, no less than to Ezra, a command to advance their welfare,—in this work we should engage with all diligence. But as the Jewish Church was typical of that which exists under the Christian dispensation, it will be proper to consider the words of our text—II. In reference to the Church which is amongst us. I propose to limit my observations to individuals amongst ourselves. I call you, then, to engage in the Lord's work with your whole hearts. Let me call you to obey this imperial mandate—1. In a way of personal reformation; 2. In a way of ministerial exertion.[c]

*No licentiousness in grace.*—Certainly to argue from Gospel mercy to sinful liberty is the devil's logic. The more a man lives in the sight of Gospel grace, the more sin will be discountenanced, resisted, hated, and totally displaced. A man may as truly assert that the sea burns, or that the fire cools, or that the sun darkens the air, as he may assert that the sight, sense, or sweet of Gospel grace will breed security or carnality, looseness or wickedness in a gracious heart.[d]

**24—26.** (24) **Nethinims,** fr. *nathan,* to give. Those who had given themselves up to serve in the temp.[a] (25) **and thou, Ezra,** *etc.*, the mind of this heathen king must have been very powerfully influenced. (26) **banishment,** called rooting out, *i.e.* outlawry.

*Importance of activity.*—It is good policy to strike while the iron is hot: it is still better to adopt Cromwell's procedure, and make the iron hot by striking. The master-spirit who can rule the storm is great, but he is much greater who can both raise and rule it. To attain that grand power, one must possess the brave and indomitable soul of activity which prompted Edmund

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"True generosity does not consist in obeying every impulse of humanity, in following blind passion for our guide, and impairing our circumstances by present benefactions, so as to render us incapable of future ones."—*Goldsmith.*

**the king's decree to the treasures**

*a* "Such as Marathon and Salamis, and in Egypt."—*Wordsworth.*

*b C. H. Spurgeon.*

*c C. Simeon, M.A.*

*v.* 23 *Alex. Henderson, A Fast Ser.* (1644).

"Nothing this world unriddles but the next."—*Dr. E. Young.*

"God has His plan for every man."—*Swiss Proverb.*

"Do not give me ready money now; give a cheque book, and I'll mend aw what I like. This is what God does with the believer. He does not immediately transfer his inheritance to him, but lets him draw what he needs out of the riches of his fulness in Christ Jesus."—*Spurgeon.*

*d T. Brooks.*

**Ezra's followers exempt from taxes**

*a Rules.*

"As Satan selects his disciples when they are idle, so our Saviour chose His while they were busy at their trade,—either mending

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their nets, or casting them into the sea. Nay, He Himself stooped to a trade, and was a carpenter."—*Farrindon.*
*b E. L. Magoon.*

**Ezra praises God**

*a Port. Com.*

*Motives to diligence.*—Suppose every day a day of harvest; suppose it a market-day; suppose it a day wherein you are to work in a golden mine; suppose it a ring, which you are to engrave and enamel with your actions, to be at night presented on God's altar."—*N. Caussin.*

"When Cyrus gave one of his friends a kiss, and another a wedge of gold, he that had the gold envied him that had the kiss, as a greater expression of favour. So the true Christian prefers the privilege of acceptance with God to the possession of any earthly comfort; for the light of His countenance is life, and His favour as the cloud of the latter rain."—*Buck.*

Burke to exclaim to his constituents in his famous speech at Bristol, "Applaud us when we run; console us when we fall; cheer us when we recover: but let us pass on,—for God's sake, let us pass on."[b]

**27, 28. blessed,** *etc.* "This devout thanksgiving is in unison with the whole character of Ezra, who discerns the hand of God in every event, and is always ready to express a pious acknowledgment for the Divine goodness."[a]

*Gratitude to God* (*v.* 27).—The late Lady Glenorchy, being in a delicate state of health, frequently employed Mrs. Graham as her almoner to the poor. On one of these visits Mrs. G. called on a poor woman with the present of a new gown. "I am obliged to you and her ladyship for your kindness," said the poor woman, rich in faith; "but I maun gang to the right airt first; ye wad nae hae come gin ye had nae been sent; the Lord hath lately left me wi' but ae goon for week-day and Sabbath, but now He hath sent you wi' a Sabbath-day's goon." Thus intimating that her gratitude was first due to the God of providence, who had put it into the hearts of His people to supply her wants. —*Thanks for human aid due to God.*—The Rev. A. Redford, in his funeral sermon for the king (George III.), states that a respectable mechanic, who had the honour and happiness to be personally known to his majesty, was, through affliction in his family, brought into great pecuniary straits. He was advised to present a petition to the king, stating his circumstances. He did so; and his majesty was pleased to appoint a certain hour on the next morning, when he was ordered to be in waiting. He went accordingly to the gate of the queen's lodge, but through diffidence did not ring for admission. He lingered until the appointed time was past by a few minutes, when the king came out with some attendants. He instantly observed the petitioner, and said, rather sharply, "I desired you to be here precisely at such an hour; it is now five minutes past the time; you know that I am punctual." His majesty condescendingly turned back, saying, "Follow me." He proceeded through several rooms, into his private closet; and, having shut the door, went to his desk and took out a purse and gave it to the applicant, and said, "There is money to pay your debts, and a trifle for yourself." The humble petitioner, overwhelmed with the king's goodness, dropped on his knees, and made a stammering effort to thank his king, but a flood of tears prevented him. His majesty instantly put forth his hand, and with considerable emotion exclaimed, "Get up, get up; thank God that I have it in my power to help an honest man."

## *CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.*

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**the companions of Ezra who went from Babylon**

*a Dr. Kitto* thinks the whole could not be less than 7,000.

**1—7.** (1) **them . . Babylon,** these are males only (1,754); as there were also women and children there must have been fr. 6,000 to 8,000[a] in the whole caravan. (2) **Daniel,** not the prophet. (3) **by genealogy,** or a lineage. (4—7) **males,** note that males only are included in this list.

"There are

*The mission of each person.*—There is not a spider hanging on the king's wall but hath its errand; there is not a nettle that groweth in the corner of the churchyard but hath its purpose;

there is not a single insect fluttering in the breeze but accomplisheth some Divine decree: and I will never have it that God created any man, especially any Christian man, to be a blank, and to be a nothing. He made you for an end. Find out what that end is; find out your niche and fill it. If it be ever so little, if it is only to be a hewer of wood and drawer of water, do something in this great battle for God and truth.[b]

**8—14.** (13) **last . . Adonikam,** 666 had already returned.[a] It is suggested that no more were left behind after these.[b] (14) **Bigvai,** ii. 14. **Zabbud,** or Zaccur.

*King James and the earl's genealogy.*—King James I., in his progress into England, was entertained at Lumley Castle, the seat of the Earl of Scarborough. A relative of the noble earl was very proud in showing and explaining to his majesty an immensely large genealogical line of the family; the pedigree he carried back rather farther than the greatest strength of credulity would allow. "In gude faith, man," says the king, "it may be they are very true, but I did na' ken before that Adam's name was Lumley.

**15—20.** (15) **river . . Ahava,**[a] so the river itself is called. **abode . . days,** this to rest, order the march, afford time for all to join the party who intended to go. **viewed,** reviewed, examined into tribes, fams., etc. **found . . Levi,** whose slackness is bef. noted, ii. 40. (16) **chief men,** men of influence and authority. **men of understanding,** with powers of persuading. (17) **Iddo . . Casiphia,**[b] "prob. Iddo was head of theological seminary, or college of Levites."[c] **told . . say,** gave the substance of the message. **ministers,** servants. (18) **by . . God,** he attributes the success of their mission to the right source. (20) **all . . name,** no promiscuous herd of men, each had his name distinctly recorded.

*A sensible retort.*—At the Anthropological Section of the British Association several members having vehemently asserted the derivation of man from lower organisms through the monkey, Professor Macgregor said that "if any man seriously believed he was so closely related to the lower animals, he was very likely to be right!"[d]—*Distinguished men of obscure birth.*—Euripides was the son of a fruiterer, Virgil of a baker, Horace of a freed slave, Anayot of a currier, Voiture of a tax-gatherer, Lamothe of a hatter, Sixtus the Fifth of a swineherd, Fletcher of a chandler, Masillon of a turner, Tamerlane of a shepherd, Greinault of a journeyman baker, Rollin of a herdsman, Molière of an upholsterer, J. J. Rousseau of a watchmaker, Sir Samuel Romilly of a goldsmith, Ben Jonson of a mason, Shakespeare of a butcher, Sir Thomas Lawrence of a custom house officer, Collins of a hatter, Gray of a notary, Beattie of a farmer, Sir Edward Sugden of a barber, Thomas More of a grocer, Rembrandt of a miller.[e]

**21—23.** (21) **then . . there,** without a military escort, carrying much valuable property. This is a fine illustration of faith. **Ahava,** *v.* 15. **afflict,**[a] humble. **right,** safe in every sense. **for . . ones,** thoughtful care of the children. (22) **ashamed,** having avowed faith in God, he would not betray any want of confidence. (23) **and . . us,** God honoured their faith.

*Ezra an example in business.*—The circumstances in which Ezra was placed were as difficult as can be conceived. He had

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greater things to be done in the future than in the past." — *Dr. Adams.*

"There is to God no future, nor a past." — *Henry Kirke White.*

*b C. Spurgeon.*

*a* ii. 13.

*b M. Henry.* Or, "who went up this last time."—*Patrick.*

"God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb."—*Sheridan.*

**the halt at Ahava**

**Levites, etc., are sent for**

*a* Acc. to *Ewald,* the Pall-a-capas, a river south of Babylon; acc. to *Rawlinson* the Hi, wh. flows into the Euphrates, 120 m. N. of Babylon. See 2 Ki. xviii. 34.

*b* Fr. *casaph,* to be white, whence *casaph,* silver. Perp. the Snow or White Mts., in South of Media. *Strabo,* i. 506; *Herodotus,* vii. 67.

*c Bp. Wordsworth.*

*d Leisure Hour* for Oct., 1871.

*e Cabinet de Ternture.*

**the fast proclaimed**

*a* Le. xvi. 29, xxiii. 29; Is. lviii. 3—5.

*vv.* 21—23. *T. E. Hawkinson,* 369.

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"The work savours of the workman. If the poet sickens, his verse sickens; if black, venous blood flows to an author's brain, it beclouds his pages; and the devotions of a consumptive man scent of his disease as Lord Byron's obscenities smell of gin. Not only 'lying lips,' but a dyspeptic stomach, is an abomination to the Lord." —*H. Mann.*

*b R. Cecil, M.A.*

*c Hive.*

to contend with the scorn and opposition of Pagans, and with the corruptions of Jews. He bears up under his difficulties; he labours through them; he endures as seeing Him who is invisible. Notice—I. His humility. II. His faith. III. His prayer. IV. His holy jealousy. V. His success.[b]—*The fast by Ahava.*—Who proclaimed this fast? Ezra. What was the chief feature? Prayer: "to seek." What was the thing sought? "A right way." Under what circumstances? Return to promised land from captivity. For whom especially was this sought? "Our little ones." Why should we do so? I. Because the way home to heaven is through the midst of danger. Perils peculiar to youth; fascinations of the world; temptations of Satan; inborn corruption and folly; evil companions and influences. II. Because the little ones are not likely to seek the right way for themselves. They think more of the pleasant than the right way; often regard religion as opposed to their present happiness. III. Because only God knows the right way, and He will show it to us. This He does by His word and His Spirit. Jesus is revealed to us as the way; His truth our guide, His life our pattern, His death our atonement. Learn—(1) To seek the right way earnestly for ourselves as well as for "our little ones;" (2) To induce the little ones to walk in and keep the right way; (3) To make the way plain and easy, in imitation of Him who carries the lambs in His bosom; (4) Are you little ones now in the "right way?"[c]

**the vessels committed to the care of the priests**

**24—27.** (24) **separated,** appointed to this special duty of being custodians of the sacred vessels. (25) **weighed,** that there might be no error at the end of the journey. (26, 27) **weighed,** *etc.*, worth acc. to value of Babylonian talent ab. £515,000 sterling. **two . . copper,**[a] some precious alloy.

*A modern encampment in the desert.*—I was in the land of the Medes, on the very spot to which the ten tribes were brought in captivity about two thousand years ago; and from which, in the fulness of time, the scattered remnants were collected (after the first return, B.C. 536, by command of Cyrus), and led back to their native land, on the decree of Artaxerxes, the king, when Ezra gathered them together to the river that runneth to Ahava, and there they abode in their tents three days: and he viewed the people and the priests. And he proclaimed a fast there, that they might afflict themselves before God, to seek of Him a right way for them, and for their little ones, and for their substance. And the Lord was entreated of them, and He delivered them from the hand of the enemy, and of such as lay in wait by the way. And Ezra, and those with him, came to Jerusalem. We see in this account, from the book of Ezra, chap. viii., that the wild tribes of the mountains were then regarded as banditti; and that no decrees of safe-conduct from the king would have more effect in those days than in the present to protect a rich caravan from ambuscade and depredation. But I must own there are some points of observation in the encampment before me which a little disturbed the resemblance between its holy grouping, and that which followed the really pious ordinance of the sacred scribe of Israel. The Mohammedan evening prayer over, all was noise of another description; bustle and riotous merriment, more like preparations for a fair than a worship; showing at once the difference in spirit between the two religions. In the

*a* "Copper shining like gold."—*Gesenius.* "Rare as the metal called auri-chalcum was."—*Patrick.* As copper was in com. use amongst the Babylonians, this could not be mere copper, wh. would not be as precious as gold.

"Faith without works is like a bird without wings; though she may hop with her companions on earth, yet she will never fly with them to heaven; but when both are joined together, then doth the soul mount up to her eternal rest."—*J. Beaumont.*

one the moral law walked hand in hand with the ceremonial, and the mandate of worshipping the one God in purity of heart and in strictness of practice was unvaryingly asserted in the chastisement or welfare of the people; and so we see it was acknowledged by the seemly and humble joy under pardon, with which the recalled Israelites returned to the land of their temple. But here the performance of certain rites seemed to be all in all—the preachers of the multitude holding forth that as they advance nearer to the shrines of their pilgrimage so in due proportion their sins depart from them; and thus every step they approach the load becomes lighter and lighter, till the last atom flies off the moment they fall prostrate before the tomb of the prophet, or saint; and from which holy spot they rise perfectly clear, free, and often too willing to commence a new score, to be as readily wiped away.[b]

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"Faith builds in the dungeon and the lazar-house its sublimest shrines; and up, through roofs of stone, that shut out the eye of heaven, ascends the ladder where the angels glide to and fro—Prayer."—*Lytton*

*b Sir R. K. Porter.*

**28–30.** (28) **ye .. Lord,**[a] *etc.*, the strongest reason he could urge for conscientious care-taking. (29) **watch .. weigh,** *etc.*, as they have hitherto been watched, and are now weighed to you. (30) **so,** *etc.*, as holy men having a holy duty to perform.

*Godly fear.*—Many men affect to despise fear, and in preaching resent any appeal to it; but not to fear when there is occasion, is as great a weakness as to fear unduly, without reason. God planted fear in the soul as truly as He planted hope or courage. Fear is a kind of bell or gong, which rings the mind into quick life and avoidance upon the approach of danger. It is the soul's signal for rallying.[b]—*The fear of God.*—An African traveller says that when among one of the most degraded and savage tribes he met with, his attention was attracted by the idol of the tribe stuck upon a high pole, as if intended to convey the idea that he could see all around the country and every one of the people. And such is their superstitious faith, that they believe that every act of dishonesty would be seen by their god, if they were guilty of such an act, and that they would be punished accordingly. The effect of this faith is, that no dishonest act is perpetrated within sight of this idol, and the most valuable property is perfectly secure.

**Ezra's charge to the priests**

*a* Le. xxi. 6–8; De. xxxiii. 8; Le. xxii. 2, 3; Nu. iv. 4, 15, 19, 20.

*b Beecher.*

"As the bristle on the shoemaker's thread goes through the hole first, and draws the thread after it; so the fear of God's vengeance first goes before, breaking man's heart, and then follows the thread of God's mercies in Christ."—*Cawdray.*

**31, 32.** (31) **then .. Jerusalem,** the whole time of the march was about 4 mo. **hand .. enemy,**[a] *etc.*, ref. to prowling bands of Bedouins. (32) **and .. days,**[b] days of rest and council, bef. proceeding to business.

"*Is father on deck?*"—A number of years ago, Captain D. commanded a vessel sailing from Liverpool to New York, and on one voyage he had all his family with him on board the ship. One night, when all were quietly asleep, there arose a sudden squall of wind which came sweeping over the waters until it struck the vessel and threw her on her side, tumbling and crashing everything that was movable, and awakening the passengers to a consciousness that they were in imminent peril. Every one on board was alarmed and uneasy; and some sprang from their berths and began to dress, that they might be ready for the worst. Captain D. had a little girl on board, just eight years old, who of course awoke with the rest. "What's the matter?" said the frightened child. They told her that a squall had struck the ship. "Is father on deck?" said she. "Yes; father's on deck." The little thing dropped herself on her pillow again without a

**the Ahava camp broken up, and arrival in Jerusalem**

*a* vii. 6, 9, 28.

*b* Ne. ii. 11.

You may do much without faith, but nothing which God will accept. "Without faith it is impossible to please Him."

"The steps of faith fall on the seeming void, and find the rock beneath."—*Whittier.*

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the vessels redelivered and the burnt-offering

fear, and in a few moments was sleeping sweetly in spite of winds or waves. Blessed child! How her confidence shames our doubts and fears, and restless vague surmisings. She had faith in father, and she had no room for fear.

**33—36.** (33) **weighed,** *vv.* 26—30. (34) **by . . one,** the least as well as greatest individually registered. (35) **offerings,**[a] expressive of humility and gratitude. (36) **commissions,** *see* vii. 21. **lieutenants,** *lit.* satraps.

*Honesty.*—A beggar asking Dr. Smollet for alms, he gave him through mistake, a guinea. The poor fellow perceiving it, hobbled after him to return it. Smollet, however, allowed him to keep it, and gave him another guinea as a reward for his honesty, exclaiming at the same time, "What a lodging has honesty taken up with!"—*Reward of conscientiousness.*—A gentleman jumping from an omnibus in the city of New York, dropped his pocket-book, and had gone some distance before he discovered his loss; then, hastily returning, he asked every passenger whom he met, if a pocket-book had been seen: finally, meeting a little girl of ten years old, to whom he made the same inquiry, she asked, "What kind of a pocket-book?" He described it. Then unfolding her apron, "Is this it?" "Yes, that is mine; come into this store with me." They entered; he opened the book, counted the notes, and examined the papers. "They are all right," said he; "fifteen notes of a thousand dollars each; had they fallen into other hands, I might never have seen them again. Take, then, my little girl, this note of a thousand dollars as a reward for your honesty, and a lesson to me to be more careful in future." "No," said the girl, "I cannot take it. I have been taught at Sunday school not to keep what is not mine; and my parents would not be pleased if I took the note home; they might suppose I had stolen it." "Well, then, my child, show me where your parents live." The girl took him to a humble tenement in an obscure street, rude but cleanly. He informed the parents of the case: they told him their child had acted correctly; they were "poor," it was true, but their pastor had always told them not to set their hearts on rich gifts. The gentleman told them they must take it; and he was convinced they would make a good use of it, from the principles they had professed. The pious parents then blessed their benefactor, for such he proved: they paid debts which had disturbed their peace, and the benevolent giver gave the father employment in his occupation as a carpenter, enabling him to rear an industrious family in comparative happiness. This little girl became the wife of a respectable tradesman of New York, and had reason to rejoice that she was born of pious parents who had secured their daughter's happiness by sending her to Sunday school.

[a] vi. 17.

"There are but three ways of living, as some one has said, by working, by begging, or by stealing. Those who do not work, disguise it in whatever pretty language we please, are doing one of the other two."—*Froude.*

"There is no terror, Cassius, in your threats; for I am arm'd so strong in honesty, that they pass by me as the idle wind, which I respect not."—*Shakespeare.*

Stealing never makes a rich man, alms never makes a man poor, and praying never hinders a man's business.

"Honesty is the best policy; but he who acts upon this principle is not an honest man."—*Whately.*

## *CHAPTER THE NINTH.*

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Ezra mourns the sins of the people

The events of this chap., and esp. the prayer of Ezra, impor-

**1—4.** (1) **princes,** *i.e.* some of them, not all, see *v.* 2. **abominations,** idolatrous practices. (2) **for . . sons,** and they were seduced to evil by these unequal marriages. **hand . . trespass,** some of those who should have withstood these practices were leaders in evil. (3) **rent . . garment . . mantle,**[a] rent my inner and outer robe: this, with plucking, etc., a sign of over-

whelming grief. (4) **then . . Israel,** the sincerely devout came to condole, advise, help.

*Rending garments.*—The Jews mingled a great deal of ceremony with the tearing of garments, when any misfortune befell them. Sometimes they made the rent from the top downwards, sometimes from the skirt upwards. The requisite length was a hand's breadth. When made on the occasion of the death of parents it was not sewed up again; when for the death of other persons it was sewed up at the end of thirty days. It is in reference to this practice that Solomon has said there is "a time to rend, and a time to sew," that is to say a time to be afflicted and a time to admit of consolation.[b]—*Oriental mourners.*—Oriental mourners divested themselves of all ornaments and laid aside their jewels, gold, and everything rich and splendid in their dress. The Grecian ladies were directed in this manner to mourn the death of Achilles: "Not clothed in rich attire of gems and gold, with glittering silks or purple." This proof of humiliation and submission Jehovah required of His offending people in the wilderness: "Therefore, now put off thy ornaments from thee, that I may know what to do unto thee. And the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments by the Mount Horeb." Long after the time of Moses, that rebellious nation again received a command of similar import: "Strip you, and make you bare, and gird sackcloth upon your loins."[c]

**5—7.** (7) **I . . heaviness,**[a] perh. comforted by the suggestions of the hour. **fell . . God,**[b] making public confession and prayer. (6) **ashamed,**[c] *etc.*, not of repentance but of the sins of the people. (7) **since . . day,**[d] the very sins of wh. they had so soon become guilty were the cause of their national disasters.

*Ezra's humiliation for the sins of his people.*—We propose to consider—I. The reason of his sorrow. He justly regarded the conduct of the people as a most heinous evil. 1. As being a violation of an express command; 2. As having an evident tendency to bring the people back to idolatry. How great his sorrow on this occasion was, we may judge from—II. The expressions of it. Note the expression of his grief the instant he was informed of their misconduct. But his humiliation before God is that which more particularly demands our attention.[e]

*Note on v.* 6.—"Ah, that fellow's sins are on his head: how numerous are the sins on his head! Alas! for such a head as that. Who can take them from his head? His iniquity is so great, you may see it on his head." Does a man wish to extenuate his crime, to make himself appear not so great a sinner as some suppose, he asks. "What! has my guilt grown up to heaven! no! no!" "Abominable wretch, your guilt has reached to the heavens." "Can you call that little, which has grown up to the heavens?"[f]

**8, 9.** (8) **little space,** *lit.* moment. **remnant,** ref. to Isa. i. 9, x. 20—22. **nail,** pin of wood for fixing a tent, meaning, a constant and sure abode.[a] (9) **bondmen,** *etc.*, see refs.[b] **give . . wall,** a fence.[c] Wall of Jerus. not yet built.

*Grace.*—I. The meaning of the word grace, and the manner in which it has been shown to us. 1. In the preservation of our country, both from foreign and domestic enemies; 2. In

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tant as evidence of E.'s acquaintance with Pentateuch, and Bks. of Isa. and Dan.

*a* Jos. vii. 6; 1 Sa. iv. 12; 2 Sa. i. 2, xiii. 31; 2 Ki. xviii. 37; Job i. 20; Ma. xxvi. 65. See also *Homer, Odyss.* x. 567.

*A bp. Leighton, Wks.* iv. 393.

*b Constable's Miscellany.*

"There is a kind of mournful eloquence in thy dumb grief, which shames all-clam'rous sorrow."—*Lee.*

*c Dr. Paxton.*

**Ezra prays and makes confession**

*a* Or affliction.

*b* Ex. ix 29—33.

*c* Dan. ix. 7 8.

*d* Ps. cvi. 6; Da. ix. 5, 6, 8.

*e C. Simeon, M.A.*

*vv.* 6, 7. *L. Sterne,* v. 63.

"Repentance hath a purifying power, and every tear is of a cleansing virtue; but these penitential clouds must be still kept dropping: one shower will not suffice: for repentance is not one single action, but a course."—*South.*

*f Roberts.*

*a* Isa. xxii. 23.

*b* Ne. ix. 36; Ps. cxxxvi. 23; Ez. vii. 28.

*c* Isa. v. 2, 5.

"O ye powers! that search the

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heart of man, and weigh his inmost thoughts! If I've done amiss, impute it not: the best may err; but ye are good."—*Addison.*

*d W. Stevens.*

*v.* 8. According to the marginal reading, "a constant and sure abode." The idea seems to be derived from the nails, or pins, with which the tabernacle was fastened to the ground. A similar allusion is contained in Isaiah xxii. 23.

*e Roberts.*

preserving our monarch from death and from family judgments, etc., in placing some wise men on the throne; 3. In granting a decree of success to our fleets and armies; 4. In preserving to us our religious privileges; 5. In preserving to us valuable lives. II. This comes from God not by secondary means or causes, nor by chance. III. The end God has in view by thus showing grace to us.[d]

*Note on v.* 8.—The margin has, "or a pin," that is, "a constant and sure abode." It is worthy of notice that the Tamul translation has it, "a hut in His holy place." "To "lighten" the eyes signifies to give comfort, to strengthen, to refresh. A father says to his son, when he wishes him to do anything, "My child, make these eyes light." "O woman, enlighten my eyes, lest I be swallowed up with sorrow." "O that our eyes were clear! who will take away the darkness from my eyes?"[e]—*A hint for teachers, etc.*—The Rev. Samuel Bottomley, for the long period of fifty-seven years the pastor of a Christian congregation at Scarborough, in the beginning of his ministry, had inscribed on the dial in his chapel the impressive sentiment, "On this moment eternity depends." A most important consideration, which should never be forgotten in the house of God, either by the preacher or his hearers.

**10—12.** (10) **what . . this,** what, in excuse; or by way of promise. (11) **by . . prophets,** *i.e.* "by the hand of," etc. Their hand of power indicating the authority with wh. they wrote. **saying,** *etc.*, a testy. to the Pentateuch.[a] (12) **nor . . peace,** *etc.*,[b] not protect them, nor enrich yourself by their wealth.

*Cause of confession of sin.*—Learn what produced confession. It was mercy. The promise is, "Whoso confesseth and forsaketh his sins shall have mercy." That promise was in substance made before any sinner confessed, otherwise there never would have been on earth any confession of sin. That promise has power. It touches a sinner while he is dead, and hard, and still as a stone—it touches and moves him. It touches his heart, and makes it flow down like water in confession; it touches his life, and leads him into the paths of righteousness. Had there been no such gracious offer from God, there would have been no such submissive surrender by man. This is a circle, you say. The sinner who confessed obtained mercy, and that very much caused the sinner to confess. So it is; and it is like God. All the worlds are globes, and all their paths are circles. His dispensations circulate. All good comes forth from Himself, and all glory returns to Himself. His mercy displayed, broke the stony heart, and caused the confession to flow; the confession flowing, opened the way for mercy to enter. If I have not a broken, contrite heart, God's mercy will never be mine; but if God had not manifested His mercy in Christ, infinite and free, I could never have a broken, contrite heart.[c]

**13—15.** (13) **after . . deeds, by** which the people should have been warned. **hast . . deserve,**[a] *lit.* hast withheld beneath our iniquities. (14) **affinity,**[b] by marriage, etc. **angry . . us,**[c] the heaviest punishment dealt out may be exceeded in the future. (15) **righteous,**[d] making a dif. betw. the evil and the good. **escaped,** the sin, as well as the punishment.

a De. vii. 1—3.

b De. xxiii. 6; *cf.* Jos. xvi. 10.

"He that repents every day for the sins of every day, when he comes to die will have the sin but of one day to repent of. Short reckonings make long friends."—*P. Henry.*

The more you yield to any known sin, the greater will be its power over you. Men may give way to the power of sin till at last they are "led captive of the devil at his will."

*c Dr. Arnot.*

a Ps. ciii. 10.
b Ne. xiii. 23—27.
c De. ix. 8.
d Ne. ix. 33; Da. ix. 14.

B.C. 457.

*The voices of the soul in view of sin, and of salvation from it.*—Under the influence of a great grief we have in our text the soul uttering two voices. I. The voice of conscience in view of sin. Conscience says—1. That man himself is responsible for his sins; 2. That the evil of sin is great; 3. That punishment is connected with sin; 4. That sin is not punished in this world according to its desert, and this for two reasons: because it is a world in which good and evil exist, because there is more mercy than justice in this world. II. The voice of wild wonder in view of God's salvation from sin. This wonder is caused by two things. 1. By the greatness of the deliverance; 2. By looking at the awful consequences of rejecting this salvation.[e]—*Use of God's diversified dispensations.*—From these words we shall take occasion to consider—I. God's diversified dispensations towards us. He has visited our sins with judgments; He has now also vouchsafed us a deliverance. To promote a suitable improvement of these dispensations, let us consider—II. The effect they should have upon us. We should look upon the sin which causes them as—1. Unreasonable; 2. As ungrateful; 3. As dangerous.[f]

*An old sailor's story.*—Once upon a time I made a voyage in a merchant barque. We were becalmed in the south seas, and weary work it were, a doing of nothin' from day to day. But when the water began to come up thick from the bottom of the water casks, it was a wearier a deal. Then a thick fog came on, as white as snow a'most, and we could'nt see more than a few yards ahead or on any side of us. But the fog didn't keep the heat off, it only made it worse, and the water was fast goin' down. The short allowance grew shorter and shorter, and the men, some of them, were half mad with thirst, and began to look bad at one another. I kept up my heart by looking ahead inside me. For days and days the fog hung about us as if the air had been made o' flocks o' wool. The captain took to his berth, and several of the crew to their hammocks, for it was just as hot on deck as anywhere else. The mate lay on the spare sail on the quarter deck, groaning. I had a strong suspicion that the schooner was drifting, and hove the lead again and again, but could find no bottom. Some of the men got hold of the spirits, and that did'nt quench their thirst, it drove them clean mad. I had to knock one of them down myself with a capstan-bar, for he ran at the mate with his knife. At last I began to lose all hope, and still I was sure the schooner was slowly drifting. My head was like to burst, and my tongue was like a lump of holly-stone in my mouth. Well, one morning I had just, as I thought, lain down on the decks to breathe my last, hoping I should die before I went quite mad with thirst, when all at once the fog lifted, like the foot of a sail. I sprung to my feet. There was the blue sky overhead, but the terrible burning sun was there. A moment more, and a light air blew on my cheek; and, turning my face to it as if it had been the very breath of God, there was an island within half a mile, and I saw the shine on the water, on the face of a rock, on the shore. I cried out, "Land on the weather quarter! water in sight!" In a moment more a boat was lowered, and in a few minutes the boat's crew, of which I was one, were lying, close and all, in a little stream that came down from the hills above.[g]

*e E. Jones.*

*f C. Simeon, M.A.*

*vv.* 13. 14. *Dr. Crowe*, 203; *Dr. J. Conant*, i. 542; *Abp. Tillotson*, ii. 371.

*v.* 15. *Bp. Reynolds*, v. 106.

"We live in the consequences of past actions."—*Dr. A. A. Hodge.*

"This is ever God's manner, when men change their deeds, to change His doom; when they renounce their sins, to recall His sentence; when they repent of the evil they have done against Him, to repent of the evil He had said He would do against them. . . . Never was a man truly and inwardly humbled but God, in the riches of His special mercy (in Christ), truly pardoned him."—*Bishop Sanderson.*

Whatsoever curse there is in sin, or punishment due to it, is taken from you, if you are in Christ; for He has made satisfaction for the one, and borne the other.

*g Dr. G. Macdonald.*

B.C. 457.

## CHAPTER THE TENTH.

**Ezra encouraged**

*a* Da. ix. 20.

"Friendship, peculiar boon of heaven." —*Johnson*

"Friendship is a sheltering tree." —*S. T. Coleridge.*

"Sorrow for past ills doth restore frail man to his first innocence." —*Nabb.*

*b Roberts.*

**1, 2.** (1) **prayed,** *etc.*,[a] ix. 5—15. **for . . sore,** *lit.* wept with a great weeping. The sight of Ezra's sorrow may have suggested to them the greatness of the sin. (2) **one . . Elam,** *v.* 26, one of the leading men but not one of the delinquents. **yet . . thing,** must have been a morally brave man to oppose in this way his nearest relatives.

*Eastern manifestations of feeling.*—People on their arrival from England are astonished at the apparent devotion of the Hindoos, when they see them cast themselves down before their temples. Those of high rank, and in elegant attire, do not hesitate thus to prostrate themselves in the dust, before the people. How often, as you pass along, may you see a man stretched his full length on the ground, with his face in the dust, pouring out his complaint, or making his requests unto the gods. It matters not to him who or what may be near him; he heeds not, and moves not, till his devotions are finished.[b]

**Ezra exhorted to begin the work of reformation**

*a* 2 Ch. xxxiv. 31.

*b* 2 Ch. xxviii. 10.

*c* Ne. v. 12.

*d D. Lewis.*

**3—5.** (3) **make . . wives,**[a] this might seem harsh and cruel to the women; but it was necessary under the circumstances. (4) **arise . . thee,** *etc.*, it was a work that needed much tact and delicacy, as well as authority. **be . . it,**[b] though the work be difficult and painful. (5) **arose,** not only fr. his knees, but to attend to this work. **swear . . word,**[c] he would have more than their mere word for it.

*Pastor and church.*—Three general remarks. I. That the Christian minister is the chief instrument in the moral renovation of society. Four things show this. 1. He is originally endowed with powers, which specially qualify him for his work; 2. He has been educated for his high vocation; 3. He has more time than others for such an end; 4. It is to the Christian minister the world looks for moral and spiritual help. II. That the true church gladly co-operates with the minister in his noble aim—1. By showing him personal sympathy; 2. By working out his plans; 3. By praying for him. III. That the co-operation of the church is a source of joy and encouragement to the minister. 1. Co-operation is indicative of the spiritual health of the church; 2. It shows that the church appreciates the minister's exertions; 3. It is a necessary condition of success.[d]

**Ezra calls an assembly at Jerusalem**

*a* Ne. xii. 10—12. *b* vii. 64; Ne. xiii. 28.

*vv.* 7, 8. *Bp. Sanderson, De Obligatione Conscientiæ*, 211.

"Confession of sin should be free, particular, full, penitential, earnest, accompanied with heartfelt hatred to sin, supplica-

**6—8.** (6) **Johanan,**[a] son of Eliashib, the high priest, who succeeded Joiakim, the successor of Jeshua. **and . . thither,** where he per. abode. (7) **proclamation,** issuing fr. a council of princes and elders held in such a place under the presidency of Ezra, would have great weight. (8) **whosoever . . days,** a longer time would have allowed space for counter action. Note the promptitude of Ezra. **forfeited,** *lit.* devoted. **separated,**[b] excommunicated.

*Confession of sin.*—He that cries to have sin taken away acknowledgeth that it lies upon him. A full confession, not of many, but of all sins, either actually committed, or habitually comprised in our body of sin. As he in the comedy said, that he had invited two guests to dinner, Philocrates and Philocrates, a single man, but a double eater; so, in examination of our-

selves, we shall every one find sins enough in himself to denominate him a double and a treble sinner. A free confession, not as Pharaoh's, extorted upon the rack; nor as that of Judas, squeezed out with anguish and horror, but ingenuous and penitent, arising from the purpose of a pious heart, that cometh like water out of a spring, with voluntary freeness; not like water out of a still, which is forced with fire.[c]

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tion for mercy, forsaking sin, and an implicit faith in Christ for the forgiveness of the same." – *John Bate.*

*c Bp. Reynolds.*

**Ezra addresses the assembly**

**9—11.** (9) **men . . Benjamin,** to wh. tribes the returned captives chiefly belonged. **ninth . . month,** betw. end of Dec. and begin. of Jan., coldest and most rainy time in Palestine. **street,** court. **trembling . . rain,** way of transgressors hard. (10) **stood . . said,** *etc.*, simply told them of their sin, did not discuss it. (11) **now . . confession,**[a] *etc.*, the honesty of the confession was to be shown in abandoning the sin.

*Illustration of v.* 9.—What a marked illustration we have of this passage every wet monsoon. See the people on a court-day, or when they are called to the different offices on business. The rain comes on; they have only a piece of cotton round their loins, and a small leaf, which they carry over their heads. They all run in a stooping position (as if that would save them from the rain) to the nearest tree, and there they sit in groups, huddled together, and trembling "for the great rain."[b]

*a* Jos. vii. 19; Pr. xviii. 13.

"Many persons who appear to repent are like sailors who throw their goods overboard in a storm, and wish for them again in a calm."—*Mead.*

*b Roberts.*

**12—14.** (12) **as . . do,** must, bec. it is right; not simply bec. it can be compelled. (13) **but . . many,** *etc.*, circumstances were against justice being done, if attempted at the time, and in a hurried way. (14) **rulers . . elders . . judges,** they propose a commission to inquire, take evidence, and correct abuses.

**the people propose a commission of inquiry**

"Man should do nothing that he should repent; but if he have, and say that he is sorry, it is a worse fault, if he be not truly."—*Beaumont and Fletcher.*

*Holy zeal.*—When that zealous and truly apostolic labourer, Mr. Grimshawe, who usually preached from twenty to thirty times a week, was entreated at any time to spare himself, his constant reply was, "Let me labour now, for the hour is at hand when I shall rest."

**15—17.** (15) **only,**[a] or but,[b] or therefore.[c] **employed,** *lit.* stood or withstood. Hence some[d] think they opposed the commission, or the proposition to have one. (16) **separated,** gave themselves up for this special work. (17) **by . . month,** so as to be ready for the Passo.

**an end made of strange marriages**

*a* So *Gesenius, De Wette, etc.*

*b* LXX.

*c Vulgate.*

*d Lightfoot, Maurer.*

*Delaying repentance.*—If a man sets about climbing a steep cliff when he is young and active, and has the free use of his limbs, he has a great advantage; the old and the crippled are pretty sure to fail. So it is with repentance. The young can mount the hill, if they set about it in good earnest, with much less evil. But they who are old in sin, they whose souls have become stiff through years of wickedness, and have grown double, so to say, by always looking earthward, how can they make the efforts which are needed for such a task? Of all hopeless miracles, the miracle of a death-bed repentance seems one of the most hopeless.[e]

*e A. W. Hare.*

**18—24.** (18) **sons,** *i.e.* descendants. **Jeshua,**[a] who came to Jerus. with Zerubbabel some 80 yrs. bef. (19) **gave . . hands,**[b] 2 Ki. x. 15. **being . . trespass,**[c] sin needs to be atoned for, as well as discontinued. (23) **Jozabad,**[d] ii. 40.

**the names of the sons of the priests who had sinned**

*a* There were 973 *priests of that house*, ii. 36.

*The sons of Jeshua.*—This good high priest had sons none of the best. White halcyons hatch black young ones. *Caligula fuit optimi viri Germanici filius.* Eli's sons were the sons of Belial.

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*b* Pr. vi. 1; Ez. xvii. 18.

*c* Le. v. 14—19.

*d* Ne. viii. 7.

*v.* 19. *Ram.* "This shows that they sinned ag. knowledge; from a sin of ignorance the oblation was not a ram, but a goat."—*Trapp.*

*e Trapp.*

Samuel's were little better, and yet it is not likely that he was faulty in that indulgence for which his own mouth had denounced God's judgments against Eli. When Cæsar Borgia, duke of Valence, invited his nobility to a feast, and after dinner cut off their heads, Pope Alexander, who was his father, hearing of it, smiled and said his son had served them a Spanish trick. When Petro Alingi Farnesis had committed an unspeakable violence on the person of Cocomus Chaerius, Bishop of Fanum, and then poisoned him, he received no other chastisement of his father, Pope Paul III., than "*Hæc vitia me non commonstratore didicit:*" he never learned these faults of these fathers. Good Jeshua had better bred his children than thus to break out in an open violence of that law which they could not but know, and should have observed. But God will show that grace is by gift, not inheritance; and men will show that, though nurture may somewhat amend nature, yet it is grace alone that can keep us within the bounds of obedience.*e*

**25—33.** (25) **moreover .. Parosh,***a* ii. 3—29. (26) **Jehiel,** *v.* 2.

*Pride of ancestry.*—M. Alexandre Dumas, born on the 24th of January, 1803, at Villiers Cotterets, in the department of the Aisne, was but one remove from negro blood. A story is told of his readiness to meet curious examinations into his ancestry. "Who was your father, M. Dumas?" some blindly fatuous fop, tempting annihilation, is said to have asked him. "A half-caste, sir," was the reply. "And your grandfather?" "A black." "And your great-grandfather?" "A baboon, monsieur: my pedigree begins where yours terminates." In point of fact, M. Alexandre-Davy Dumas was the son of M. Alexandre-Davy Dumas, who was the son, over the bar sinister, of M. le Marquis de la Pailleterie, a wealthy planter of San Domingo, by a negress. On the death of his father, who distinguished himself during the wars arising out of the Revolution, our Alexandre Dumas migrated to Paris, with the hope of obtaining some post, through the influence of his family connections, but, as he has declared, was coldly received. A letter of introduction to General Foy gained him a start for which he was always ready to express his gratitude.*b*

*a* "All that are named from Parosh, in *v.* 25, to Shimeon (*v.* 31), were of Judah" —*Wordsworth.*

When Adam dolve, and Eve span, who was then a gentleman? Then came the churle, and gather'd good; and thence arose the gentle blood.

"I am no herald to inquire of men's pedigrees: it sufficeth me if I know their virtues."—*Sir P. Sidney.*

*b London paper.*

True nobility consists not in the natural, but in the spiritual pedigree: every child of God is of Royal descent. "This is true greatness, to be patient in conscious strength. The only possibility of it is to put things into God's hand. Only in still waters of the soul can the Divine image be reflected. All gracious processes are wrought in restful souls."—*H. Allon.*

**34—44.** (44) **all these,** *etc.*, *lit.* "and there were of them wives, and they had children."

*Concluding note.*—It would be erroneous to limit our view of Ezra's character and mission to what we read of him in this book. We see him here, coming from Babylon, and bringing a train of followers with him out of the land of captivity. We see him weeping for the sins of the people, and praying to God for them, and conjuring them to renounce those heathen alliances by which their affections had been ensnared, and by which they were beguiled from God. But he did much more than this; and that is related in the following book, the Book of Nehemiah, which is called "The Second Book of Ezra" in the Vulgate and Arabic. There is something significant and interesting in the fact that Ezra's principal actions in behalf of the Church of God are not recorded by himself, but by Nehemiah, his fellow-labourer in the cause of religious restoration. *See* Neh. viii. 1—9.*c*

*c Wordsworth.*

# THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH.

# Introduction.

**I. Title.** "Bk. of Nehemiah," so called from the name of its author, is in some versions (as the *Latin* and *Greek*) termed the Second Bk. of Ezra, or Esdras; from an opinion once held (by *Athanasius*, *Epiphanius*, *Chrysostom*, etc.) that Ezra was the author of this book. **II. Author.** Not the Nehemiah who returned to Jerusalem from Babylon with Zerubbabel (Ezra ii. 2; Neh. vii. 7), but an eminent Jew of that name (wh. sig. whom "*Jehovah comforts*"), who by tradition is variously said to have been a Levite, and of the tribe of Judah, a descendant of the royal house. This latter is prob., since the post he held (that of cup-bearer, *Tirshatha*, a word meaning also a governor) at the Persian court was not likely to be bestowed on any but a person of some distinction. It was while in attendance on Artaxerxes Longimanus, in the twentieth year of his reign, that a conversation (ii. 1—8), occasioned by a previous meeting with some travellers from Jerusalem (i. 1—3), led to his commission to visit Jerusalem, and rebuild its walls. Arriving here, he, amid much opposition, executed his task; and, also in conjunction with Ezra, carried on a work of reformation among the people. At the close of twelve years (xiii. 6) he returned to the Persian court (ii. 6, v. 14), but after some time (variously estimated at from 5 to 9 years) he was permitted to resume his office and his work in Jerusalem; where he prob. ended his days. He is thought to have also written memoirs of his government (2 Macc. ii. 13), from which this book was compiled; and likewise to have assisted Ezra in the revisal of the Canon of Scripture. **III. Time.** His administration, including the interval, lasted prob. fr. 445 to 409 B.C. These are the dates assigned by Prideaux, though no certain time can be fixed for the *second* administration. The Scripture history closes with this book, and recourse therefore must be had to the Books of the Maccabees, and to Josephus, for the particulars of the Jewish history from B.C. 420 to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans A.D. 70. **IV. Uses.** This book is invaluable for the lesson it teaches, that when the Church of God is at the lowest, it will still be protected by His Almighty hand, will be enabled to triumph over the malice of its external enemies, and will be purged and purified from the internal corruptions which endanger it far more than any hostility from without. It is also of great value from its fulness of topographical detail. In inquiries concerning the ancient city, its site, walls, towers, gates, and principal buildings, chaps. iii. and xii. are simply invaluable. For copiousness, exactness, and authority, these chapters excel all the other notices that have come down to us with respect to ancient Jerusalem; and the possibility of recovering the general plan of the place rests almost entirely upon Nehemiah's descriptions. (See article by *Canon Rawlinson* in the *Bible Educator*.)

*Additional note on the character of Nehemiah.*—Nehemiah presents a noble example of true patriotism, founded on the fear of God (v. 15), and seeking the religious welfare of the State. His respect for the Divine law, his reverence for the Sabbath (xiii. 18), his devout acknowledgment of God in all things (i. 11, ii. 18), his practical perception of God's character (iv. 14, ix. 6—33), his union of watchfulness and prayer (iv. 9, 20), his humility in ascribing all good in himself to the grace of God (ii. 12, vii. 5), are all highly commendable. In the ninth chap. we have an instructive summary of the history of the Jews in its most important light, showing at once what God is, and what men are. Few books, indeed, of the Bible, contain a richer illustration of Divine philosophy,—that is, of true religion taught by example.—*Angus*.

# Synopsis.

*(According to Horne.)*


PART I.—The departure of Nehemiah from Shushan with a royal commission to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem .....i., ii.

PART II.—Account of the building of the walls.....ii. 12—20, iii.—v.

PART III.—Nehemiah's first reformation.

*Sect.* 1. Those who returned and their offerings .....vii. 5—72

*Sect.* 2. Reading of the Law, and the Feast of Tabernacles .....viii.

*Sect.* 3. The Fast and the Covenant ...ix., x.

*Sect.* 4. Sundry Lists, etc., Completion of the Wall .....xi., xii.

PART IV. — Second reformation of Nehemiah on his second return to Jerusalem, and his correction of abuses which had crept in during his absence .....xiii.


*(According to Ayre.)*


PART I.—The commission and departure of Nehemiah...i., ii.

PART II.—The repairing of the walls of Jerusalem, and opposition of Sanballat and Tobias .....ii. 11, iv.

PART III.—Reformation of the abuses of usury .....v.

PART IV.—Celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles, and public reading of the Law .....viii.

PART V.—Solemn fast and humiliation, and national covenant to serve God.....ix., x.

PART VI.—Second reformation of Nehemiah on his return to Jerusalem.....xiii.


*Additional note on the authorship of this book.*—The authorship of Nehemiah is a rather complicated problem. Were we to regard the opening phrase of the work (i. 1) as intended strictly to apply to the whole treatise, the question would be simplified, and we should merely have to say that "Nehemiah," like "Ezra," is the composition of the writer whose name it bears. But internal difficulties—historical and critical—render this view untenable. Nehemiah's probable date is B.C. 470—420. (See *Speaker's Commentary*, iii. 426.) Portions of the book must have been written latter than B.C. 336, since mention is made in them of Jaddua and of Darius Codomannus (xii. 11, 22). Again, three chapters of the work (viii., ix., x.) contrast strongly in their style with the portions *certainly* written by Nehemiah, and possess various features indicating that they are from another hand. There is thus reason to believe that the work. as it stands, is a compilation, different parts of which are to be assigned to different authors.—*The Rev. Canon Rawlinson, M.A.*

B.C. *cir.* 446.

## CHAPTER THE FIRST.

**1—3.** (1) **Nehemiah . . Hachaliah,** *see Intro.* **Chisleu,**[a] the winter month. **in . . year,**[b] of Artaxerxes Longimanus. **Shushan,** or Susa, on the Choaspes, ab. 200 ms. S.E. of Babylon; the principal winter residence of ks. of Persia.[c] (2) **Hanani . . came,** to Susa. **I asked,** *etc.*, Neh. high in office, had not lost his patriotism. (3) **province,**[d] Judæa. **wall,**[e] *etc.*, in the same state as left by Nebuchadnezzar 142 yrs. before.

*God in storms.*—Peace is the centre of the universe. The God of peace is undisturbed by tempest; albeit He is in all storms as their master and guide. I. He is in all material storms. 1. He commands them; 2. He uses them. II. He is in all moral storms. 1. He is in the conflict of man with man; 2. He is in all conflicts of man with himself.[f]

*Shushan, or Susa.*—In 1851 Mr. Loftus, who had been attached as geologist to the commission for settling the boundaries of Turkey and Persia, under Col. (now Major-General) Williams, C.B., was permitted by that officer to superintend the excavations which Col. Rawlinson had been authorised by the British Government to undertake at Susa, at the public expense. And he accordingly commenced, under that officer's directions, a series of excavations, which led to the discovery of the remains of a vast building, 343 feet in length, 244 feet in depth, and consisting of a central square of thirty-six columns, with square bases, flanked on the west, north, and east by a similar number, with bell-shaped bases, the latter being arranged in groups of twelve, or in double rows, containing six each. It is very remarkable that the plan and measurements of the colonnade agree completely with those of the great hall of Xerxes at Perseopolis; and there are good grounds for supposing that both edifices were designed, though not finished, by the same architect. On the bases of more than one of the pedestals were found trilingual inscriptions in the cuneiform character, in which the name of Artaxerxes, Darius, and Xerxes have been read.

**4—6.** (4) **sat . . wept . . fasted,** vivid picture of true patriot mourning over the fall of his country. **prayed,** turns in his sorrow to the God of all consolation. (5) **O . . heaven,**[a] the Omnipresent and Almighty One. **that . . mercy,**[b] "Neh., like Ezr., adopts words of Pentateuch."[c] (6) **let . . attentive,** ref. to anc. promise,[d] and Sol.'s prayer.[e]

*Praying to God.*—A gentleman conversing with his friend respecting the exercises of his own mind, before and after conversion, observed that there was a great difference as to the objects of prayer. "When I was," said he, "only a nominal Christian I used to pray to my family, if any strangers were present I prayed to them, when I was alone I prayed to myself; but since I have been renewed by Divine grace, in all my prayers I pray to God."[f]—*The wonders of faith and prayer.*—Abraham's servant prays—Rebekah appears. Jacob wrestles and prays—the angel is conquered, and Esau's mind is wonderfully turned from the revengeful purpose he had harboured for twenty years. Moses cries to God—the sea is divided. Moses prays—Amalek is discomfited. Joshua prays—Achan is discovered. Hannah

**Nehemiah hears of the state of Jerusalem**

*a* Ezra x. 9.

*b* B.C. 445, 91 yrs. aft. decree of Cyrus (Ezra i. 1), 71 yrs. aft. ded. of temp. (vi. 15), 13 yrs. aft. commis. of Ezra. By *Bede, Ussher, Hengstenberg, Ld. A. Hervey*, this 20th of A. long regarded as the begin. of Daniel's weeks.

*c* Ecbatana, Ezra vi. 2, the summer residence.

Dan. vii. 2; Est. i. 2; *Herodotus.* i. 181; *Xenophon, Cyrop.* viii. 6—22; *Strabo*, x. 317; see also *Pusey on Dan.* 400.

*d* Ezra v. 8.

*e* ii. 17; 2 Ki. xxv. 10.

*f Dr. Thomas; Bp. Hall, Cont.*

*v.* 2. *Dr. R. Sibbs, Spiritual Favourite at the Throne of Grace.*

**Nehemiah's prayer**

*a* ii. 4; Ezr. i. 2; Da. ii. 37.

*b* De. vii. 9.

*c Wordsworth.*

*d* Le. xxvi. 40—45.

*e* 1 Ki. viii. 46—52.

*v.* 4. *Bp. Hackett*, 849.

*f Dr. Cheever.*

"Wandering thoughts in prayer are like vagrants; the best way to rid the country of the one, and the

prays—Samuel is born. David prays—Ahithophel hangs himself. Asa prays—a victory is gained. Jehoshaphat prays—the lions are muzzled. Daniel prays—the seventy weeks are revealed. Mordecai bade Esther fast—Haman is hanged on his own gallows in three days. Ezra prays at Ahava—God answers. Nehemiah darts a prayer—the king's heart is softened in a minute. Elijah prays—rain descends apace. Elisha prays—Jordan is divided. Elisha prays—a child's soul comes back. The church prays ardently—Peter is delivered by an angel. Peter and Silas prayed and sang praises—the doors of the prison were opened and every man's bands were loosed. Prayer has a thousand commands and promises. Prayer has a thousand examples of rich success.[g]

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heart of the other, is to give them the law—the lash I mean."—*A divine of the 17th century.*

*g Dr. Ryland.*

**7—9.** (7) **we . . thee,** Neh. associated national disaster with sin. (8) **remember . . Moses,** *etc.*, "another ref. to Pentateuch."[a] (9) **but . . me,** *etc.*, Neh. pleads the old promise. The Divine faithfulness therein pledged.

*Repentance.*—"Which is the most delightful emotion?" said an instructor of the deaf and dumb to his pupils, after teaching them the names of our various feelings. The pupils turned instinctively to their slates, to write an answer; and one, with a smiling countenance, wrote "Joy." It would seem as if none could write anything else; but another, with a look of more thoughtfulness, put down "Hope." A third, with a beaming countenance, wrote "Gratitude." A fourth wrote "Love;" and other feelings still claimed the superiority on other minds. One turned back, with a countenance full of peace, and yet a tearful eye; and the teacher was surprised to find on her slate "Repentance is the most delightful emotion." He returned it to her with marks of wonder, in which her companions doubtless participated, and asked, "Why?" "Oh!" said she, in the expressive language of looks and gestures which marks these mutes, "it is so delightful to be humbled before God!"

*a* Le. xxvi. 33, 39—45; De. iv. 25—31, xxviii. 64, xxx. 1—4.

"The more we believe, the more we are able to believe. And with this will come clearer views of the object, and more profound, immovable, and intense persuasion."—*Alexander.*

Always begin your daily duties with the greatest of all duties, viz., fervent prayer.

**10, 11.** (10) **now . . people,** these who thus suffer, and sorrow. **whom . . hand,** and who, taught by the past, have no hope but in Thee. (11) **for . . cup bearer,**[a] *lit.* one who gave him to drink. Neh. was one, but not the only one, of such.

*The spiritual favourite.*—It is an excellent skill and art in prayer to have strong arguments. Empty relations have no comfort in them. We must make good the relation we stand in to God, before we can claim an interest in His favour. Those that will prevail with God in prayer must look to the bent of their souls for the time to come, and for the present. I. The nature of true desires. God values men by their desires. The greatest part of Christianity is to desire to be a Christian with all the heart. 1. They are constant desires, not flashes: 2. They are hearty, strong, and growing; 3. They include the favour of God and spiritual grace; 4. They are carried to the desire of heaven itself; 5. They regard the means of salvation. Weak Christians, who find feebleness in their performances, may comfort themselves by true desires (Isa. xxvi. 8; Matt. xii. 20; Psa. cxlv. 19). II. The service that is truly prosperous. 1. In ourselves there is neither discretion nor wisdom, nor ability for success; 2. We must attribute wisdom, strength, goodness, yea, all to God; 3. Dependence upon God; 4. Recommendation of all by prayer.[b]—*The king's cup-bearer.*—I. The secular calling of

*a* "This was providential; for it is noted of the Persian kings that they were always inclined to grant requests wh. were preferred to them at banquets; of which we have evidence in the case of Esther."—*Wordsworth.*

*b R. Sibbes.*

*v.* 11. *W. Jay, Short Disc.* ii. 242.

"One feels the best things without speaking of them."—*Auerbach.*

"Smooth runs the water where the brook is

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deep." — *Shakespeare.*

"Prayer is a great privilege, but it is also a duty. In certain states of the body men lose all appetite for food. Are they to yield to this want of appetite? If they do yield to it they are soon starved to death. Sometimes, without appetite, it becomes necessary for them to take day by day nourishment. Just so is it in respect to prayer. If I cannot pray as a privilege I am to pray as a duty, for if I be a true disciple I *must* pray." — *Rev. Samuel Martin.*

*c Burder.*

"Prayer is the rope up in the belfry: we pull it, and it rings the bell up in heaven."—*Christmas Evans.* — "I fear John Knox's prayers more than an army of ten thousand men." — *Mary, Qn. of Scotland.*— "Want felt, help desired, with faith to obtain it, is prayer."—*Adam.* "Prayer is our speech to God: when we read, God speaks to us; when we pray, we speak to God."—*Agustine.* — "Prayer and pains can do anything."—*Eliot.*

Nehemiah did not lessen his piety. II. The secular position of Nehemiah did not affect his sympathy with his countrymen. III. The secular position of Nehemiah gave him an opportunity for displaying his piety and assisting his countrymen. Remember —1. God specially honours those who serve Him; 2. We shall be the better able to resist the temptation of our secular position by serving God.

*Nehemiah's prayer.*—Houbigant supposes that Nehemiah repeated this prayer, which he had often before used, now again in silence, while he administered the cup to the king in his office. The office of cupbearer was a place of great honour and advantage in the Persian court, because of the privilege which it gave him who bare it of being daily in the king's presence, and the opportunity which he had thereby of gaining his favour, or procuring any petition he should make to him. That it was a place of great advantage seems evident by Nehemiah's gaining those immense riches which enabled him for so many years, out of his own purse only, to live in his government with great splendour and expense, without burdening the people. According to Xenophon, the cupbearer with the Persians and Medes used to take the wine out of the vessels into the cup, and pour some of it into his left hand, and drink it, that if there was any poison in it, the king might not be hurt; and then he delivered it to him upon three fingers.[c]—*The power of prayer.*—One of the first ships in which prayer meetings were held on the River Thames was bound from Shields to London, with a cargo of coals. On her passage she was overtaken by a dreadful gale of wind, in which another vessel was lost, with all hands except the master and carpenter. The gale continued with unabated fury for a considerable time. The ship became unmanageable, all hopes of saving her were given up, and the crew every moment expected to meet a watery grave. There were two boys on board, one of whom, named Jack, cried very much, and said, "Oh! I shall be drowned; I shall never see my mother any more!" The other boy, whose name was Dick, went to him, and, seemingly unmoved at the awful situation they were in, said, "Don't cry, Jack, I am not afraid; don't you know that they always pray for our ship in the river? It is now Tuesday evening, eight o'clock; there is a prayer meeting on board some ship, and I know they will not forget us." The remark of this lad fell upon the captain's ear, as he was standing by, almost in despair: it roused him to fresh exertions, and he was enabled to cast his ship and crew on the mercy of that God who holds the winds in His fist, and the waves in the hollow of His hand. In a short time the wind veered a point or two in their favour; they got the ship under management, and in forty-eight hours she was safely moored in the Thames. At the request of the captain, the Bethel flag was hoisted, and they had a meeting for prayer and thanksgiving for this great deliverance, at which all present were much affected. A friend to whom the captain had mentioned the circumstance of the boys went to them, and said to Dick, "Was it you, Dick, that cried during the gale?" "No, sir, it was not I; it was Jack. I was not afraid of being drowned. Don't you always pray for our ship?" "Yes; and did not you pray?" Yes, I did. sir. as well as I could." "And what did you say, my lad?" "I said, O Lord, save my master! O Lord, save the ship; let Daniel's God now

save us." "I hope you always pray, Dick." "Yes, sir: ever since the prayer meeting was on board our ship, I never go to my hammock, or leave it in a morning, without prayer."

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## CHAPTER THE SECOND.

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**1—3.** (1) **Nisan,** or *Abib*,[a] the 1st mo. **wine . . him,** some[b] think on a festal day. **now . . presence,** it was unbecoming to appear in the royal presence with any signs of sorrow.[c] (2) **sad,** *lit.* evil, ill-favoured. (3) **let . . ever,**[d] customary salutation. **the . . sepulchres,**[e] *lit.* the house of the graves of my fathers.

Nehemiah's sadness is noticed by the king

*a* Est. iii. 7.

*b Bertheau.*

*c* Est. iv. 2.

*d* Da. ii. 4, iii. 9.

*e* "This ref. to their graves implies a belief in their resurrection. *cf.* Gen. xlix 29, l. 24 25." —*Wordsworth.*

*Providential information.*—The Rev. Dr. Bedell relates that while Bishop Chase, of Ohio, was at the house of a Mr. Beck, in Philadelphia, he received a package from Dr. Ward, the Bishop of Sodor and Man, making inquiries relating to certain property in America, of which some old person in his diocese was the heir. The letter had gone to Ohio, followed him to Washington, then to Philadelphia, and found him at Mr. Beck's. When he read it to Mr. B., the latter was in amazement, and said, "Bishop Chase, I am the only man in the world who can give you information. I have the deeds in my possession, and have had them forty-three years, not knowing what to do with them, or where any heirs were to be found." How wonderful that the application should have been made to Bishop Chase, and he not in Ohio, but a guest in the house of the only man who possessed any information on the subject!

*v.* 3. *J. Saurin,* iv. 48.

*vv.* 3—5. *H. Melvill, Facts,* i. 337.

**4—6.** (4) **for . . request,** the king in a gracious humour. Nehemiah might have sought his own advantage. **prayed,** *see Homily.* (5) **said . . king,**[a] *etc.*, having prayed to be guided *what* to request, and that he might not be denied. (6) **queen,** queen consort; supposed to be Q. Damaspia.[c] **sitting,** they usually reclined in the East. **I . . time,**[d] Neh. did not leave Jerus. till 12 yrs. aft.

Nehemiah's request of the king

*a* "This form of speech, so frequent in mouth of Neh., was no affected strain of court-ship, but a just expression of duty; otherwise that religious man would never have used it."—*Bp. Sanderson,* i. 38.

*b* Heb. *shegal.* Ps. xlv 10; Da. v. 2, 3, 23; only occurs in these places.

*c Ctesias, Ussher.*

*d* v. 14, xiii. 6.

*Prayer before choosing.*—Two things strike us here. 1. A rare opportunity for worldly advancement; 2. A rare treatment of such an opportunity. Now the principle involved in such an obligation—that prayer should precede choosing—is of universal obligation. Three things show the wisdom of this. I. God alone knows what is best for us. II. God always desires what is best for us, and that He desires our happiness is clear—1. From the capacity of enjoyment with which He has endowed us; 2. From the elements of happiness with which the world abounds; 3. From the mission of His only begotten Son. III. God, in answer to prayer, is ever ready to bestow what is best for us. Conclusion:—Let us ever act on the principle that prayer should precede choice.

*v* 4. *B. Bennet,* ii. 156; *Dr J. Fletcher,* iii. 333.

*The cupbearer.*—Xenophon informs us of the manner in which the Median (and consequently Persian) cupbearers discharged their office. He admires the neat and graceful manner in which they poured out the wine and presented it to the king. From his description it seems that the cup was washed in the king's presence, and, being filled, was carried to the king and presented to him on three fingers. His account is explained by existing customs in the East—according to which no servant ever grasps

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a cup or other vessel which he gives or takes from his master, but rests it upon his left hand, and places his right hand lightly upon it, to prevent it from falling. Thus every article, however small, is carried and presented with both hands. . . . It appears also from Xenophon that it was the duty of the cupbearer to take some of the wine from the cup presented to the king into his left hand, and drink it off, to assure the monarch against poison.[e]—*God hears prayer.*—A lady, who had just sat down to breakfast, had a strong impression upon her mind that she must instantly carry a loaf of bread to a poor man who lived about half a mile from her house, by the side of a common. Her husband wished her either to postpone taking the loaf of bread till after breakfast, or to send it by her servant; but she chose to take it herself instantly. As she approached the hut, she heard the sound of a human voice. Willing to hear what it was, she stepped softly, unperceived, to the door. She now heard the poor man praying, and among other things he said—"O Lord, help me; Lord, Thou wilt help me; Thy providence cannot fail; and although my wife, self, and children, have no bread to eat, and it is now a whole day since we had any, I know Thou wilt supply me, though Thou shouldest again rain down manna from heaven." The lady could wait no longer; she opened the door. "Yes," she replied; "God has sent you relief. Take this loaf, and be encouraged to cast your care upon Him who careth for you; and whenever you want a loaf of bread, come to my house."[f]

*Dr. Kitto.*

"Ejaculations are swift messengers that need not much time to deliver their errand, nor much time to return again to the soul. You may point your earthly employments as men do their writings, with stops, and pauses are no hindrance.

Communion with God is more in conversation with God, than in contemplation of God.

*f Whitecross.*

**he asks letters to the governors**

**7—8.** (7) **governors,** or satraps. **river,** Euphrates. (8) **forest,** prob. near Jerus.; perhaps Ætam, 7 ms. S. of Jerus.[a] **gates . . house,** official residence. **according . . me,**[b] the king appears to have tried in this to reward Neh. for his administration of affairs. But his success was accord. to good hand of God.

*Letters of introduction.*—No person of consequence travels in the East without a letter or *kattali*, that is, a command from the Rasa, the governor, the collector, or officer in authority, to the different chiefs of the districts through which he may have to travel. Were it not for this, there would often be a difficulty in getting supplies, and there would generally be a great delay; the officers would be insolent and overbearing, and the purveyors would demand thrice the worth of the articles. The letters in question are generally in duplicate, so that one precedes the traveller, and the other is in his possession. Thus, when he arrives at the choultry, or rest-house, there will always be people to receive him, who are ready to furnish him with supplies, and coolies to help him on his journey. Sometimes they declare that they are in the greatest want, that they cannot get rice, have neither fish nor fowls, and are brought to the lowest ebb of misery.[c]

It has been noted that after this grant of the king Persian affairs—which had not gone well in Egypt, etc.—prospered.—*Wordsworth*; see also *Abp. Ussher, Annales*, 110.

*a Jos. Ant.* viii. 7, 3.

*b* Ezr. v. 5, vii. 6, 9, 28.

*c Roberts.*

**Nehemiah arrives at Jerusalem, and delivers his credentials**

**9—11.** (9) **letters,** *v.* 8. **sent . . me,** Neh. went as an officer of the king. (10) **Sanballat,** *landed by the army.* **Horonite,**[a] not of *Beth-horon*, 12 ms. N.W. of Jerus., but of Horonaim in Moab.[b] **Tobiah,**[c] *pleasing to Jehovah.* **servant,** prob. had been a slave. **Ammonite,** hence no friend of the Jews. **grieved,** or enraged. (11) **so . . days,** resting, and observing; and prob. hearing conflicting accs. of matters. The enemy beg. to intrigue.

*a* Jos. x. 10. *b* xiii. 27, 23; *cf.* Is. xv. 5; Jer. xlviii. 3, 5, 34.

*A wise servant.*—In one of Mrs. Gaskell's stories, an old servant is made to say:—"There's a right and a wrong way of setting about everything—and to my thinking, the right way is to take a thing up heartily, if it is only making a bed. Why, deary me! making a bed may be done after a Christian fashion. I take it, or else what's to come of such as me in heaven, who've had little time enough on earth for clapping ourselves down on our knees for set prayers. Just try," she continued, "for a day, to think of all the odd jobs as to be done well and truly in God's sight, not just slurred over anyhow, and you'll go through them twice as cheerfully."—*Answer to prayer.*—A short time since, three Christians fixed by agreement on a merchant of Philadelphia, doing a large business, but who had no interest in Christ, to make him a subject of special prayer. They agreed to meet at the same hour each day to pray for his conversion. Having done so for two or three days, they said to a fourth, a merchant, "We want you to go and talk to that man about his soul." "I will go," he said. He went, found the merchant in his counting-house, in the midst of business, and asked him for an interview. It was granted. He told him at once the object of his visit. "I have come to speak to you about Jesus." The man's head fell upon his breast. He was silent. "If you feel that you need a Saviour, I have come to tell you that His salvation is free, and that you may have it if you will." "Do you say that?" he asked. "I repeat it: I have the highest authority for it," said the visitor. "Will you go with me to see my pastor to-night?" "I will go to-night," he replied. That evening the merchant and his friend came to the minister, the former anxiously inquiring for Jesus, and sitting with the simple earnestness of a little child, begging to know more of the way of life.

**12—16.** (12) **arose,**[a] Neh. would see for himself; a time when the foe was not present with plausible tales (*see Homily*). (13) **gate . . valley,**[b] pr. nr. present *Jaffa Gate*, on the W.;[c] it led to Valley of Hinnom. **dragon well,** prob. W. of Jerus., nr. Gihon.[d] **dung port,** prob. not far fr. *Jaffa Gate.*[e] (14) **king's pool,** *i.e.* of Solomon;[f] S. of Moriah. **no . . pass,** no beaten road. (15) **brook,** Kidron.[g] (16) **rulers . . did,** the information thus obtained in the dusky night more reliable than their daylight communications. They must have wondered at his information.

*Nehemiah, the model worker.*—Two or three questions to clear the way: Who was this Nehemiah? when did he live? what was the work he now set himself to do? what prompted him to this work? I. He works thoughtfully. II. He works independently (*v.* 12). 1. The opinions of others cannot determine our duty; 2. The opinions of others may embarrass us in duty. III. He worked influentially. 1. The people saw that he understood the matter; 2. The people saw that he was thoroughly in earnest. IV. He worked heroically. 1. Look at the sacrifices he made; 2. Look at the enemies he encountered; 3. Look at the labour he effected. V. He worked religiously. 1. His impulses to act he ascribed to God; 2. His rule of action he derived from Him; 3. His sacrifices in the work he made for Him; 4. The spirit in which he performed his work was that of dependence upon Him.[h]

*Effects of earnestness.*—A peasant's family were seated in their

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*c* He was allied to some of the chief Jews, hence many favoured him. There was also some connection betw. him and Eliashib, the H. priest (xiii. 4—9).

*v.* 10. *T. Bradbury*, ii. 293.

Our prayers and God's mercies are like two buckets in a well; while the one ascends the other descends; so, while our prayers ascend to God in heaven, His blessings and mercies descend to us upon the earth.

"Prayer is the chief thing that man may present unto God."—*Hermes.*

**Nehemiah's night inspection of the walls**

*a* Perh. Ps. cii. was written at this time.
*b* 2 Ch. xxvi. 9; Ne. iii. 13.
*c* *Robinson*, i. 472; *Ferguson* in *Smith's Bib. Dic.* i. 1027.
*d* *Robinson*, i. 514.
*e* See *Berthean*, 168, but the site is doubtful.
*f* *Josephus, B. J.* v. 4, 2.
*g* *Robinson*, i. 474.
*h* *Dr. Thomas.*

"Earnestness is all-heartedness. The difference between an earnest man and others is just this, that while they do things coldly, perfunctorily, without interest, because they have to be

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done, and for no other reason, he puts his whole soul into his labour, does it with hearty good will, with a vigorous, healthy zeal and because he loves to do it."—*C. M. Merry.*

*i G. Mogridge.*

A poor woman was offered half-a-sovereign if she would not pray all day. She rejected it, saying, "No, sir, not for all the worlds this side heaven; but I'll just go ask the Lord to help you to believe on Him; and then you'll love prayer as much as I do."

"Earnestness is enthusiasm tempered by reason."—*Pascal.*

*j F. W Robertson.*

**Nehemiah tells the rulers of his intention**

*a* Ne. i. 3; Ps. xliv 13, lxxix. 4; Jer. xxiv. 9; Ez. v 14, 15 xxii. 4.

*b* 2 Sa ii. 7.

*c Bersier*

The missionary John Williams once said that two little words make the greatest mountains of difficulty melt—"try" and "trust."

cottage when the thatch on the roof was in flames, and not knowing of the accident, their lives were in great danger. A man of slow habits, a spinner in speech, went in to them to explain the accident, and to point out the necessity of providing for their safety: but while he was in the middle of his long-winded observations, another man rushed in, concentrating all he had to say in a single word, "Fire! fire!" when the alarmed throng immediately started up, and hurrying through the cottage-door, escaped the danger.[i]—*Fruits of earnestness.*—Do you wish to become rich? You may become rich: that is, if you desire it in no half way, but thoroughly. A miser sacrifices all to his single passion; hoards farthings and dies possessed of wealth. Do you wish to master any science or accomplishment? Give yourself to it, and it lies beneath your feet. Time and pains will do anything. This world is given as the prize for the men in earnest; and that which is true of this world is truer still of the world to come. "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." Only there is this difference. In the pursuit of wealth, knowledge, or reputation, circumstances have power to mar the wisest schemes. The hoard of years may be lost in a single night. The wisdom hived up by a whole life may perish when some fever impairs memory. But in the kingdom of Christ, where inward character is the prize, no chance can rob earnestness of its exactly proportioned due of success. "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." There is no blight nor mildew, nor scorching sun, nor rain deluge which can turn that harvest into a failure. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth." . . Sow for time, and probably you will succeed in time. Sow the seeds of life—humbleness, pure-heartedness, love; and in the long eternity which lies before the soul, every minutest grain will come up again with an increase of thirty, sixty, or an hundredfold.[j]

**17, 18.** (17) **then . . them,** *etc.*,[a] their wonder must have been great. They had a man among them who would not trust to mere report: a man of independent thought and action. (18) **they said,** *etc.*, encouraged by this display of energy, and his royal commission. **so . . work,**[b] by preparation, and prayer, and mutual congratulations.

*The ruins of Jerusalem.*—I. Show in what way our position reminds us of Nehemiah's times. II. What his example should teach us. 1. Sorrow; 2. The spirit of sacrifice; 3. The greatness of his faith.[c]

*Diligence explained.*—Diligence comprises both the impulse of the bowstring that despatches the arrow, and the feather that keeps it true to its aim. *Diligo*, the Latin word from which diligence is derived, means "I choose," "select," or "love." To be diligent, therefore, is to resemble an eager hunter, who selects the fattest of the herd, and, leaving the rest, pursues and captures that one. Napoleon I. won his victories chiefly by rapid concentration of his forces on one point of the enemy's line. A burning-glass is powerful because it focalises a mass of sunbeams on one point. So, in all departments of activity, to have one thing to do, and then to do it, is the secret of success.

**Sanballat**

**19, 20.** (19) **Geshem,** called also *Gashmu.*[a] Prob. chief of

Arab tribe with appointment fr. Persian court.[b] **laughed,**[c] tried effect of ridicule. The work so great, the builders so few, and their means so small. **will . . king,** they turn from scorn to charge of rebellion. (20) **answered,** *etc.*, a reply marked by faith in God, by lofty courage, and a bold counter-charge.[d]

*The zeal of Nehemiah.*—Whoever engages diligently in the work of God must expect trials. But Nehemiah encouraged himself in the Lord. It is my intention—1. To set before you the graces he exercised. 1. His confidence ; 2. His zeal. Admiring the virtues of this eminent saint, I proceed—II. To commend them to your imitation. Be ye, my brethren, followers of him—1. In reference to God's work in the world at large ; 2. In reference to God's work in your own souls.[e]—*A new year's homily.*—I. An honourable name Nehemiah appropriates to himself and to his fellow-labourers. II. A holy purpose Nehemiah had before him. III. A severe strife. His work does not prosper without conflict. IV. A true support. V. A conscious fidelity. VI. A glorious triumph.[f]

*Fruit of diligence.*—Long ago a little boy was entered at Harrow School. He was put into a class beyond his years, and where all the scholars had the advantage of previous instruction denied to him. His master chid him for his dulness, and all his efforts then could not raise him from the lowest place in the class. But, nothing daunted, he procured the grammars and other elementary books which his class-fellows had gone through in previous terms. He devoted the hours of play, and not a few of the hours of sleep, to the mastering of these ; till, in a few weeks, he gradually began to rise, and it was not long before he shot ahead of all his companions, and became not only leader of the division, but the pride of Harrow. You may see the statue of that boy, whose career began with this fit of energetic application, in St. Paul's Cathedral ; for he lived to be the greatest Oriental scholar in modern Europe—it was Sir William Jones. When young scholars see the lofty pinnacle of attainment on which that name is now reposing, they feel as if it had been created there, rather than have travelled thither. No such thing. The most illustrious in the annals of philosophy once knew no more than the most illiterate now do. And how did he arrive at his peerless dignity ? By dint of diligence ; by downright painstaking.[g]—*Diligence.*—Select a large box and place in it as many cannon-balls as it will hold ; it is after a fashion full ; but it will hold more if smaller matters be found. Bring a quantity of marbles ; very many of these may be packed in the spaces between the larger globes ; the box is full now, but only full in a sense ; it will contain more yet. There are interstices in abundance, into which you may shake a considerable quantity of small shot, and now the chest is filled beyond all question, but yet there is room. You cannot put in another shot or marble, much less another cannon-ball, but you will find that several pounds of sand will slide down between the larger materials, and even then between the granules of sand, if you empty yonder jug there will be space for all the water, and for the same quantity several times repeated. When there is no space for the great, there may be room for the little ; where the little cannot enter, the less can make its way ; and where the less is shut out, the least of all may find

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**and others scorn the undertaking**

*a* vi. 6.

*b* iv. 7.

*c* Ps xliv. 13, lxxix. 4, lxxx. 6.

*d* Ezr. iv. 3.

*e C. Simeon, M.A.*

*f Oosterzee.*

Fear secretes acids, but love and trust are sweet juices.

"Even in our days faith has a hidden, miraculous power in every believer. At first miracles were the support, they are now the object of faith."—*Bengel.*

Faith never reasons ; she acts from her own point of view, and leaves results with God.

*g Dr. J. Hamilton.*

"A great many professed Christians have no other idea of religion than that it is the means of getting to heaven when they die. As to doing anything for God while they live, it does not enter into their plans. I tell you, my brethren, I do not believe there is one in five hundred of such professors that will reach heaven ; for there is magnanimity in true religion that is above all such contemptible meanness."—*Dr. L. Beecher.*

"The few that pray at all pray oft amiss ; and, seeking grace to improve the prize they hold,

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ample room and verge enough. Now, the diligent preacher may not be able to preach more sermons; his engagement book is crowded. He may not be able to offer more public prayers, or to search the Word of God more constantly; there is as much time occupied with these things as could well be given to them. Still there must be stray moments, occasional intervals and snatches, which might hold a vast amount of little usefulness in the course of months and years. What a wealth of minor good, as we may think it to be, might be shaken down into the interstices of ten years' work, which might prove to be as precious in result, by the grace of God, as the greater works of the same period. Little fishes are sweet, and these little works might possess in blessing what they lacked in bulk.[h]

"would urge a wiser suit than asking more."—*Cowper.*

"Heav'n's never deaf but when man's heart is dumb."—*Quarles.*

## *CHAPTER THE THIRD.*

**names and order of the builders**

**1—3. (1) Eliashib,**[a] *God restores;* son of Joiakim, son of Jeshua. **sheep gate,**[b] E. side of Jerus., nr. present St. Stephen's Gate. **Meah,** *hundred;* betw. S. gate and tower of **Hananeel,**[c] *graciously vouchsafed by God;* at N.E. corner of city. (2) **next,** *lit.* at his hand. **the . . Jericho,** repairing the part that looked toward their own country. **Zaccur,** *mindful;* a good name for a builder. **Imri,**[d] *promise of the Lord.* (3) **fish gate,**[e] on N. side, nr. the tower. **Hassenaah,** *thorny;* prob. the name of a town—*Senaah;*[f] some of whose men built this gate.

*Reward of diligence.*—We read in story of one Furius Cresinus, a Roman, who was accused of witchcraft in drawing away the fat of other men's land into his own, for that every year he had great crops, and his neighbours small or none; this they thought came by enchantment, and thereof he was questioned in judgment. The poor man brings with him all his tools of husbandry, heavy mattocks, weighty ploughshares, full-fed oxen, all his irons, much bigger and stronger than his neighbours', and, lastly, his daughter, a strong and big maid, who was his helper in his business; and, setting all these before his judges and accusers, cried out in these words, "'*Hæc sunt quirites, beneficia mea!*' This daughter, these oxen, these tools, are the instruments of my witchcraft, and besides these I use none, and these with diligence I apply." This is the way to have great and good crops of grain and grace, if thou lay thy hand with diligence to the plough, and have fitting instruments. But withal, ever with the ploughman be looking up upon the sun; and with the pilot, who, as he holdeth his hand upon the stern, hath his eye upon the star. For it is good ground, a good husbandman, and God's blessing, that bring good crops, whether for soul or body.[g]—*Thoughtful industry.*—A gentleman, named Quatremer Disjonval, was once thrown into a dungeon in the city of Utrecht. Without a companion, without books, what could he do in his solitary prison? Apparently nothing. But unwilling to be idle even there, he gave himself to the careful study of the habits of a spider, which had spun its web within his cell. He soon found himself able to predict changes in the weather from its movements—a trifling discovery, but yet vastly useful to him in the issue; for the next winter a French army invaded Holland, and was in full tide of victory, when a sudden thaw stopped its

[a] Ne. xii. 10.

"Eliashib, forward in erecting the material walls, but neglected the inner life (xiii. 4, 7). An example of such as are zealous for church restoration and decoration, without being zealous for purity of faith and holiness of life."—*Wordsworth.*

[b] Jo. v. 2, see *Bib. Mus. N. T.* ii. 254.

[c] Jer. xxxi. 38; Zec. xiv. 10.

[d] 1 Ch. ix. 4.

[e] Nr. fish market (xiii. 16), frequented by fishmongers fr. the north, *i.e.* Tyre, 2 Ch. xxxiii. 14.

[f] Ezr. ii. 35; Ne. vii. 38.

[g] *N. Rogers.*

"At the workingman's house hunger looks in, but dares not enter: nor will the bailiff or the constable enter: for industry pays debts, but despair increaseth them."—*Franklin.*

progress, and led its chiefs to resolve upon a retreat. But the prisoner, who had learned its movements from his jailer, and who, from the conduct of the spider, judged that severe frost would soon return, contrived to inform the French of his opinion. They put faith in his judgment, and maintained their ground. The frost soon returned, as he predicted. The victorious French completed their conquests, and Disjonval was set at liberty.

4—7. (4) **Meremoth,** *heights;* a priest.[a] **Urijah.**[b] *flame of Jehovah.* **Koz,**[c] *thorn.* **Meshullam,** *friend,* i.e. of God; also called Shallum,[d] *retribution.* **Berechiah,** whom *Jehovah hath blessed.* **Meshezabeel,** *delivered of God.* **Zadok,** *just.* **Baana,** *son of affliction;* perh. the same as in x. 27. (5) **Tekoites,** *tent-dwellers,* or *trumpet-blowers.* (6) **old gate,**[e] perh. a remain of anc. Jebusite fortifications. On the N. betw. fish g. and g. of Ephraim. (7) **men . . Mizpah,** fr. 4 to 5½ m. to the N.W., this part faced that point. **throne . . river,** prob. the official residence of Persian Exarch.[f]

*Idle people.*—(See Neh. ii. 16, v. 17, whence it seems that Nehemiah got as little real sympathy as help from them, and that they employed their "hours of idleness" in laying taxes upon others.)—1. A solitary exception. Some who did work. Who? "Nobles," men probably of larger influence and information, might have done much. II. An implied censure. Note was taken of the idle ones; they were not passed over because they were nobles; their example injurious, their time misspent. Learn:—Let us seek to be one of those to whom the Master will say, "Well done."

*The nobles of Tekoah.*—So haughty they were and high-minded, they thought it a business below their greatness; somewhat of that profane Earl of Westmoreland's mind, who said that he had no need to pray to God, for he had tenants enough to pray to Him. Not many mighty, nor many noble, saith the Apostle; well if any. The lion and the eagle were not for sacrifice, as the lamb and the dove were; yet the old nobility of Israel were forward in their staves of honour, and are therefore famous (Num. xxi. 18).[g]—*Personal effort.*—According to Christ's law, every Christian is to be active in spreading the faith, which was delivered not to the ministers but to the saints, to every one of them, that they might maintain it, and spread it according to the gift which the Spirit has given them. Shall I venture a parable? A certain band of warlike knights had been exceedingly victorious in all their conflicts. They were men of valour and of indomitable courage; they had carried everything before them, and subdued province after province for their king. But on a sudden they said in the council-chamber, "We have at our head a most valiant warrior, one whose arm is stout enough to smite down fifty of his adversaries; would it not be better if, leaving a few such as he to go out to the fight, the mere men-at-arms, who make up the ordinary ranks, were to rest at home? We should be much more at our ease; our horses would not so often be covered with foam, nor our armour be bruised, the many would enjoy abundant leisure, and great things would be done by the valiant few." Now, the foremost champions, with fear and trembling, undertook the task and went to the conflict, and they fought well, as the rolls of fame can testify; to the best of their ability they unhorsed their foes and performed great exploits. But still, from

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"Absence of occupation is not rest, a mind quite vacant is a mind distress'd."—*Cowper.*

*a* Ezr. viii. 33.

*b* Perh. it was he who stood by Ezr. when he read the law, Ne. viii. 4.

*c* Head of one of the courses, 1 Ch. xxiv. 10.

*d* 1 Ch. iv. 12, 13 Ezr. vii. 2.

*e* Exit for Anathoth, Gibeah, Samaria, etc.

*f* In later times the Rom. prætorium was in the city. Ma. xxvii. 27; Mk. xv. 16.

Where there is light it will show itself; where there is leaven it will work; and where there is life it will act.

"Condemn the fault, but not the actor of it."—*Shakespeare.*

*g Trapp.*

In the museum at Rotterdam is the first piece painted by the renowned Rembrandt. It is rough, without marks of genius or skill, and uninteresting, except to show that he began as low down as the lowest. In the same gallery is the masterpiece of the same artist, counted of immense value. What years of patient study and practice intervene between the two pieces! If all have not

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genius, all have the power to work; and this is greater than genius.

"A favourite illustration among the Arabs of extreme idleness is the man that would not turn his head over on his pillow though the muddy water leaking through the roof fell plump into his eye."—*Dr. Thomson.*

*h C. H. Spurgeon.*

*a* Ex. xxx. 33; 1 Sa. viii. 13; Song iii. 6.

*b* The word, wh. occurs more than 200 times in O.T., is only here and in vi. 2 rendered fortify.

*c* So *Wordsworth.*

*d* "In the Ch. of God, every man ought to endeavour to build up a wall of Christian virtues over against his own house, and to fortify his own heart ag. the assaults of his spiritual enemy."—*Bede.*

The total loss of time in pure contented idleness, needless sleep, and painful listlessness, is to be condemned without mercy as the most unqualified guilt.

Idleness is a great social crime which carries about with it not only its own punishment, but all suffer who come within the pale of its association.

the very hour in which that scheme was planned and carried out no city was taken, no province was conquered. Then the knights met together, and said, "How is this? Our former prestige is departed. our ranks are broken, our pennons are trailed in the dust: what is the cause of it?" When out spoke the champion, and said, "Doubtless it is so, and for a reason clear and plain. How did you think that a slender band could do the work of all the thousands? When you all went to the fight, and every man took his share, we dashed upon the foe like an avalanche, and crushed him beneath our tramp; but now that you stay at home, and put us, who are but a handful, to fight every battle, how can you expect that great things should be done?" So each man resolved to put on his helmet and his armour once again, and hasten to the battle, and lo, the angel of victory returned. If we are to subdue the earth, every one of us must join in the fight. We must not exempt a single soldier of the cross, neither man nor woman, rich nor poor; but each must fight for the Lord Jesus according to his ability, that His kingdom may come, and that His will may be done in earth even as it is in heaven. We shall see great things when all agree to this and put it in practice.[h]

8—12. (8) **goldsmiths,** of whom there must have been some kind of guild. **apothecaries,**[a] compounders of spices and perfumes. **fortified,**[b] should be "left out," *i.e.* they omitted a pt. of the anc. city, and restricted the circuit within a narrower range.[c] (9) **ruler . . Jerusalem,** or half of the district round Jerus. (10) **over . . house,** the part wh. faced his own house,[d] *v.* 23.

*Examples of earnestness.*—When Dr. Chalmers occupied the chair of philosophy in the College of St. Andrews, he used to gather into his own house, each Sabbath evening, the poorest and most ignorant of the vagrant children of the neighbourhood; and his biography states that, for that audience, he prepared himself as carefully, with his pen in his hand, as for his class in the University. So, on a winter-day, through frost, and in the face of a driving snowstorm, you might have seen him walking five miles to fulfil an appointment of religious worship with a little company of rustic people at Kilmany; and there, amid some illiterate, shivering cottagers, too few for a church or chapel, met in a damp room—an audience that many men would have thought it expedient to dismiss at once. "on account of the weather," and many more would have put off with some crude, unpremeditated talk—he preached as laboured and as eloquent a sermon as would have moved to rapture and wonder the learning and fashion of Glasgow or of London. It is only of such earnest stuff as this that the truly commanding persons in any of the elevated ranges of action or of learning are made.—*Personal work.*—I once heard a story of an American, who declared he could fight the whole British army, and when he was asked how he could draw so long a bow as that, he said, "Why, this is what I would do: I know I am the best swordsman in the world, so I would go and challenge one Britisher, and kill him; then take another, and kill him. Thus," said he, "I only want time enough and I would kill the whole British army." It was a ridiculous boast, but there is something in it which I could not bring out so well in any other way. If we want to conquer the world for the Lord Jesus Christ, rest assured we must do it in the Yankee's fashion; we must take men one by one, and these ones must be

brought to Christ, or otherwise the great mass must remain untouched. Do not imagine for a moment that you are going to convert a nation at once; you are to convert the men of that nation, one by one, through the power of God's Holy Spirit. It is not for you to suit your machinery and arrange your plans for the moving of a mass as such, you must look to the salvation of the units.[d]

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*d C. H. Spurgeon.*

**13—15.** (13) **valley gate,** nr. Ch. of Holy Sepulchre, in the W. **Zanoah,**[a] *marsh.* 11 m. S.W. of Jerus., now *Zānū'a.* **dung gate,** ii. 18. (14) **Beth-haccerem,**[b] *house of the vineyard.* (15) **gate . . fountain,** W. of city; and S. of Valley Gate; nr. Jaffa Gate. **part** = district. **of . . Siloah,**[c] S.E. of the city.

*a* Jos. xv. 34.

*b* Part of = district of.

*c* A subterranean water course, 1,750 ft. long, fr. Fount of the Virgin, supplies it, see *Robinson,* i. 507.

*The king's garden.*—I. This brings to mind the garden of Paradise which the Great King prepared for man. II. The garden of Gethsemane is another garden, which reminds us how the sin that spoiled the first garden was atoned. III. Our heart should be a garden in which the fruits of holiness, the results of that atonement, should be found. IV. The Church is as a well-watered garden.[d]

*d C. H. Spurgeon.*

*An example of modern activity.*—Gladstone is a marvellous man. One wonders how he finds time to make himself master of the details of everything that comes before Parliament; but he does so, and manages to indulge his tastes for art into the bargain. Only the other evening I saw him busy over some old china in a Wardour-street establishment, half an hour before he rose to deliver a long speech in the House of Commons. The greatest men have their weaknesses. The Prime Minister would walk ten miles, or pay a large price, to obtain possession of a cracked cup or a broken saucer, in which a person devoid of his ceramic judgment would see nothing at all to admire.[e]

"A man should inure himself to voluntary labour, and not give up to indulgence and pleasure; as they beget no good constitution of body, nor knowledge of the mind."—*Socrates.*

*e London Letter.*

*Work for Heaven.*—

If thou have thrown a glorious thought
Upon life's common ways,
Should other men the gain have caught,
Fret not to lose the praise.

Great thinker! often shalt thou find,
While folly plunders fame,
To thy rich store the crowd is blind,
Nor knows thy very name.

What matter that? if thou uncoil
The soul that God has given—
Not in the world's mean eye to toil,
But in the sight of Heaven?

If thou art true, yet in thee lurks
For fame a human sigh,
To Nature go and see how works
That handmaid of the sky.

Her own deep bounty she forgets,
Is full of germs and seeds;
Nor glorifies herself, nor sets
Her flowers above her weeds.

She hides the modest leaves between;
She loves untrodden roads;
Her richest treasures are not seen
By any eye but God's.

Laziness grows on people; it begins in cobwebs, and ends in iron chains. The more business a man has, the more he is able to do, for he learns to save his time.

In a workhouse at Hamburg, idlers are punished by being suspended in a basket above the tables, so that they can see and smell the things provided for the industrious, but are not allowed to taste them.

"A man is relieved and gay when he has put his heart into his work and done his best; but what he has said or done otherwise shall give him no peace."—*Emerson.*

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Accept the lesson—look not for
Reward—from out thee chase
All selfish ends;—and ask no more
Than to fulfil thy place.[f]

*f* *Household Wds.*

**16—20.** (16) **half part,** see *v.* 9. **Beth-zur,**[a] *house of the rock*, now Beit Sûr, ab. 15 ms. S. of Jerus. **unto .. David,**[b] in Zion, but exact site is not certain. **pool .. made,** prob. at or ab. this time. **unto .. mighty,**[c] quarters of king's bodyguard, or guard of temp. (17) **Keilah,**[d] *fortress*, prob. ab. 8 ms. E. of Eleutheropolis; nr. Hebron. (19) **another piece,** *i.e.* the second piece, the first being, perh., that of *v.* 17, or *v.* 15. (20) **earnestly repaired,** Baruch, "provoked to godly jealousy by Ezra."[e]

*a* Jos. xv. 58; 1 Ch. ii. 45; 2 Ch. xi. 7.

*b* *Robinson*, i. 358; *Stanley, Sin. and Pal.* 456.

*c* 1 Ch. ix. 26.

*d* Jos. xv. 44; 1 Sa. xxiii. 1—13; 1 Ch. iv. 19.

*e* *Wordsworth.*

*Willingness to work in order to give.*—A man in W——, who depended for support entirely on his own exertions, subscribed five dollars annually in support of the Bombay schools. His friends inquired, "Why he gave so much, and how he could afford it?" He replied, "I have for some time been wishing to do something for Christ's cause; but I cannot preach, neither can I pray in public, to any one's edification, nor can I talk to people; but I have hands, and I can work."—*Unintentional liberality.*—One who by mistake had dropped a half-crown into the plate asked for it back, offering the penny which he intended to give. Being a rich man, the reply was. "Nay, we will keep the half-crown, but we shall give you credit only for the penny."

**21—25.** (21) **Eliashib,** the high priest, *v.* 1. (22) **men .. plain,** of the Jordan,[a] or plain nr. Jerus. (23) **over .. house,** *v.* 10. (24) **another piece,** *v.* 19. (25) **tower .. house,** watch-tower by the royal palace, in the fortification of the wall of the palace.[b] **by .. prison,** scene of Jeremiah's confinement.[c]

*v.* 19. "*Turning of wall, i.e.* the wall across the Tyropœan."—*Barclay.*

"Nature knows no pause in progress and development, and attaches her curse on all inaction."—*Goethe.*

*a* See *Vulg.*

*b* *Barclay.*

*c* Jer. xxxii. 2, xxxi.

*Good works will not save us.*—The eminent Bishop Butler, notwithstanding his blameless life and signal services to the cause of truth and religion, was in fear of death from the consciousness of sin and infirmity. He was reminded by his chaplain of the Saviour's atoning work, and the passage was quoted, "Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out." This was a message of peace to the dying prelate, who shortly afterwards "fell asleep."—*Work and pray.*—Asa and Ira were two brothers whose farms lay side by side in a fertile intervale. When the young corn, the oats, and the barley were springing up, the weeds took advantage of the rich soil and came up with them. "Do you see," said Asa, "what a hold the weeds are taking? There is danger of their choking out the crops entirely." "Well, well, we must be resigned," said Ira. "Weeds as well as grain were a part of the Creator's plan." And he lay down for his usual afternoon doze. "I can only be resigned to what I cannot help," said Asa. So he went to work, and ploughed and hoed until the fields were clear of weeds. "The army-worm is in the neighbourhood," said Asa to Ira, one day. "It has eaten its way through the neighbouring meadows, and is fast moving towards us." "Ah!" exclaimed Ira, "it will surely destroy what the weeds have not choked out. I will immediately retire to pray that its course may be stopped, or turned aside." But Asa replied, "I pray betimes every morning for strength to do the work of the day." And he hastened to dig a trench around his land, which

The covenant of works does not promise righteousness; the covenant of grace promises both life and righteousness.

"Works without faith is like a salamander without fire, or a fish without water; for though there seem to be some symptoms of life, yet they are but the presages of death."—*J. Beaumont.*

"The most precious wine is produced upon the sides of volcanoes. Now bold and inspiring ideas are only born of a clear head that stands over a glowing heart."—*Horace Mann.*

the army-worm could not pass; while Ira returned from his prayers only in season to save a portion of his crops from its ravages. "Do you see, Ira?" said Asa, another morning, "the river is rising, and there is but small chance of preventing our farms from being overflowed." "Alas! it is a judgment upon us for our sins; and what can we do?" said Ira, throwing himself in despair upon the ground. "There are no judgments so severe as those which our own sloth brings upon us," said Asa. And he went quickly and hired workmen, with whose help he raised an embankment that withstood the flood; while Ira witnessed with blank looks the destruction of his wealth. "There is one consolation," said he: "my children, at least, are left me." But, while Asa's sons grew up strong and virtuous men, among Ira's there was a drunkard, a gambler, and a suicide. "The ways of the Lord are not equal," said Ira to his brother. "Why are you always prospered, while I am afflicted, and my old age is disgraced?" "I only know this," replied Asa, "that heaven always helped me to meet my children's faults as I met the weeds, the caterpillars, and the flood; and that I never presumed to send a petition upward, without making toil my right-hand servant, the messenger of my prayer."

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"Eschew thilde life! Flee, flee from doing nought! for never was there idle brain but bred an idle thought."—*Tuberville.*

"Ydelnes, that is the gate of all harmes. An ydil man is like an hous that hath noone walles; the develes may entre on every syde."—*Chaucer.*

**26—32.** (26) **Nethinims,**[a] the meanest persons, as well as priests, etc., aided in the work. **Ophel,**[b] hill S. of temp. (27) **Tekoites,** *v.* 5. (28) **horse gate,**[c] nr. S.E. of temp.[d] (29) **east gate,** E. of the temp. (30) **over . . chamber,** prob. a store cham.[e] in the temp. (31) **goldsmith's son,** *v.* 8. **gate Miphkad,** perh. N.E. of temp.[f] (32) **sheep gate,** *v.* 1.

*Christian building begins at home.*—What a singular scene it must have been in old Jerusalem, after the return of the exiles, when the resuscitation of the city was going on? Nearly every head of a household seems to have worked independently of his neighbours, and some did not, as may be supposed, apply their energies in the best way. There must have been instances of lost labour and lost time; but Nehemiah especially singles out the priests, because they repaired those portions which lay nearest to them. We cannot regard this as an act of selfishness or laziness: evidently it was a prudent and practical step on their part, and their example may have led others in the right course, as it may influence us also. Do we build over against our houses? that is, do we undertake the piece of work which lies to our hand to do, and which appeals to us mutely or perhaps audibly? For human nature is apt to be speculative, and we fancy at times that we can build more artistically and agreeably at a distance from our proper domain, or upon some neighbour's plot. But as charity begins, yet ends not at home, so does, to speak figuratively, Christian house-building and wall-repairing. If the majority of workers in our churches devoted themselves to those tasks which from their nearness offer such facilities for their execution, how greatly would the labours of our pastors be lightened, and how much more rapid would be the progress of true Christianity! We do not forget the claims which foreign fields present; but nothing scarcely is more hurtful to the Christian life than to stand waiting and wishing for work which is not by God in His providence marked out for us. So that it holds good in evangelising as well as in the ordinary affairs of life, that it is well to "do the duty that lies nearest the thing

*a* 1 Ch. ix. 2.

*b* 1 Ch. xxvii. 3. Identified by *Robinson* (i. 267), with continuation of Moriah, S. towards Siloam, betw. Jehoshaphat to the E., and Tyropœan to the W. It is ab. 1,550 ft. long, 290 bd., and ends in rocky bluff, 40 or 50 ft. above pool of Siloam.

*c* Jer. xxxi. 40.

*d* *Josephus*, ix. 7, 3, says it led to Kedron.

*e* *Gazophylacium*, see LXX. and Vulg.

*f* Ez. xliii. 21.

*vv.* 28 — 30. *A. Fuller*, 676.

"As every thread of gold is valuable, so is every minute of time."—*J. Mason.*

A motto on the walls of the Delphian temple, ascribed to Periander, one of the seven wise men of Greece, was, "Nothing is impossible to industry."

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known to be a duty," because in that case, as duty will succeed duty, all hesitancy vanishes.

## CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

**rage of Sanballat, etc.**

Foxes were known to infest, in great numbers, the ruined and desolate places in the mount and city of Zion, Lam. v. 18.

**1–3.** (1) **Sanballat,** ii. 10, 19. **that . . wall,** this occurred bef. the events narrated in cap. iii. (2) **will . . day,** the builders were at work at every point in the circuit of the walls. **revive . . burned,** he regarded the stones as calcined and unfit for the purpose. (3) **Tobiah,** ii. 10, 19. **fox . . wall,** the wall would yield to the light step of a fox, and much less would it resist a siege.

*Contemptuous expressions.*—When men deride the workmanship of a mason, they say, "*Che!* why, if a dog or a jackal run against that wall, it will fall." "*A wall!* why, it will not keep out the jackals."

**Nehemiah's prayer**

[a] Ps. cxxiii. 3, 4, cxxiv., cxxv., cxx., cxxi., cxxvii., cxxix.

[b] *Wordsworth.* "The imprecations invoked here may seem harsh, cruel, and vindictive. But it must be remembered that Nehemiah and his friends regarded those Samaritan leaders as enemies to the cause of God and His people, and therefore as deserving to be visited with heavy judgments. The prayer, therefore, is to be considered as emanating fr. hearts in wh. neither hatred, revenge, nor any inferior passion, but a pious and patriotic zeal for the glory of God, and the success of His cause, held the ascendant sway." —*Port. Com.*

[c] *C. Simeon, M.A.*

**4–6.** (4) **hear,** *etc.*, sev. of the Pss.[a] were either composed or adopted at this time. (5) **cover not,** *etc.*, Ps. lxxxv., cix. 14. **provoked,** "the verb here is used absolutely for provoking God, as De. xxxi. 29."[b] (6) **was . . thereof,** of the intended half. **for . . work,** the great secret of success.

*The efficacy of zeal and diligence.*—Let us consider—I. The reason assigned for their success. 1. The work which the people had to perform was attended with many difficulties; 2. But by zeal and intelligence they were enabled to accomplish it with incredible despatch. Notice—II. The instruction we may gather from it. There are two truths that may justly be deduced from this history. 1. In everything we have to do for God, zeal and diligence are necessary; 2. In everything we have to do for God zeal and diligence will ensure success. Address—(1) Those who make excuses for not engaging in the work of their souls; (2) Those who have entered on the Lord's work.[c]—*A mind to work.*—I. A comparison suggested: many have a mind to—1. Talk; 2. Look on; 3. Find fault with others for not working; 4. Find fault with the work done. II. A fact stated. 1. They worked: work itself is generally useful, this work a most blessed one; 2. They worked willingly, "had a mind;" work done willingly the best and the soonest done; 3. Worked unitedly, "the people;" they all worked. Learn:—We should all be workers in the Sunday school, teaching or learning; and learning that we may teach.

*Zeal.*—An Indian having heard from a white man some strictures on zeal, replied, "I don't know about having too much zeal; but I think it is better the pot should boil over, than not boil at all." "Zeal and discretion united together are like the two lions which supported the throne of Solomon; and he which hath them both is like Moses for mildness, and like Phinehas for service; therefore, as wine is tempered with water, so let discretion temper zeal."

**conspiring of the enemy and precautions of Nehemiah**

[a] Ps. lxxxiii. 3–5.

[b] *Heb.* to make an error in it.

[c] Ps. l. 15.

**7–9.** (7) **wroth,** they first ridiculed the undertaking as impossible of execution. The walls, now half the intended height, gave promise of completion. (8) **conspired**[a] **. . hinder,**[b] they thought to demolish the work, and in some way to intimidate the builders. (9) **we . . God,**[c] they did not depend on their own prowess or sagacity. **set . . them,** they used means as well as prayed.

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*The character of Nehemiah.*—We seem unable to find a single fault to counterbalance his many and great virtues. For pure and disinterested patriotism he stands unrivalled. Every act of his during his government bespeaks one who had no selfishness in his nature. All he did was noble, generous, high-minded, courageous, and to the highest degree upright. But to stern integrity he united great humility and kindness, and a princely hospitality. As a statesman he combined forethought, prudence, and sagacity in counsel, with vigour, promptitude, and decision in action. In dealing with the enemies of his country he was wary, penetrating, and bold. But in nothing was he more remarkable than for his piety, and the singleness of eye with which he walked before God. He seems to have undertaken everything in dependence upon God, with prayer for His blessing and guidance, and to have sought his reward only from God.[d]

*v* 9. *W. Jay, Short Disc.* i. 292; *R. P. Buddicom*, ii. 216.

"The fire of discord turns a house into a little hell, full of the tormenting passions, sorrow and and anguish, disdain and despite, malice and envy, that blast the most flourishing families."—*W. Bates.*

*d Ld. A. Hervey.*

**rumours and threats of the enemy**

**10—12.** (10) **Judah**, hindrances without, and complaints within. **strength .. decayed**, exhausted by excessive toil and watching. (11) **they .. them**, and caused these rumours of some sudden attack or night assault to be circulated, so as to cause a constant and disheartening fear. (12) **ten times**,[a] again and again travellers to Zion brought rumours of impending dangers, and reports of intended mischief; and builders living at a distance N. fr. the city spoke of molestations.

*a* Ge. xxxi. 7.

"The Jews who dwelt near the enemy, and were harassed by them, and appealed to Neh. for help, sent to him ten times, and said that foes would be upon them everywhere, wherever their brethren had left them to return and build the city; see *v.* 15, and see also *v* 22, whence it appears that some of the builders came up fr. neighbouring villages to build, as related, iii. 2—7."—*Wordsworth.*

*Burdens and rubbish.*—I. Who are spiritually the burden-bearers in the text? and what are the burdens? 1. Penitents, who are burdened with a guilty conscience—with a fear of death—with a dread that they shall not attain mercy; 2. Believers, who are burdened with a wicked heart—persecutions—afflictions—violent temptations. II. When may it be said their strength decays? 1. Of penitents when they give up hope of obtaining mercy—when they grow sick of duty—when they give way to sin; 2. Of believers when they do not bear persecution with patience, or afflictions with resignation—when they do not watch against temptation—when they do not seek for complete holiness. III. The rubbish. 1. There is much rubbish amongst professors in general; 2. Much ignorance in penitents; 3. Much indwelling sin in babes; 4. Much sloth in all classes of Christians; 5. Much irregularity in their lives. IV. This rubbish hinders the walls of the spiritual Jerusalem from being built. 1. It keeps penitents from obtaining pardon; 2. Babes from growing in grace; 3. The stronger from being sanctified; 4. It hinders the ministers of the Gospel from being useful; 5. Till this is removed we cannot expect a universal blessing, nor a pure Church.[b]

*b W. Stevens.*

*Duration of works.*—A party of surveyors in Arizona, engaged in exploring the country for railroad routes, lately came upon some very extensive ruins on the banks of the Little Colorado River. They extend along the river for many miles. Some of the walls of buildings are yet in place, and stand six or eight feet high. The streets may be traced for miles. The old irrigating canals and ditches are yet in a fair state of preservation, and may be traced for miles also. The ground is strewed with broken crockery. The party found some nearly whole vessels of curious form. Many of the walls of the buildings were built of hewn stone, and put up in a workmanlike manner. To all appearance, here once stood a city of many thousand inhabitants. Who

"I look upon indolence as a sort of suicide; for the man is effectually destroyed, though the appetite of the brute may survive."—*Chesterfield.*

"Earnestness alone makes life eternity."—*Carlyle.*

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they were, or to what tribe they belonged, there is no record left to show. On the east bank are the ruins of a large structure or castle, covering several acres of land: some of the walls are yet standing to the height of twenty or thirty feet.

**the people guard and watch, and work**

13—15. (13) **lower . . wall** (*see v.* 6), most open to attack. Men should especially defend the weak side of their character, while still building it up. **higher places,** to attack the enemy, and defend the "lower" places. **set . . families,**[a] one part to fight while another worked: one family to stimulate another. (14) **remember the Lord,**[b] the best of all arguments for patriotic courage. **fight . . houses,** the true patriot should be disinterested (15) **that . . us,** what their evil designs were. **God . . nought,**[c] by discovering their plans, by giving wisdom to Neh., and patriotism to the people.

*Patriotic war.*—I. Its purpose—to fight for home, and friends, and kindred. II. Its characteristic—defensive. III. Its spirit—religious. Remember the Lord. If men in war remembered the Lord, their wars would—1. Be seldom undertaken; 2. Be seldom unjustifiable; 3. Be seldom any other than defensive.

*Encouraging exhortations.*—The ancients appear to have done more to excite the valour of the soldiers than merely exhorting them to be courageous. This will appear in the following citation: "A circumstance which greatly tends to inflame them with heroic ardour, is the manner in which their battalions are formed. They are neither mustered nor imbodied by chance: they fight in clans, united by consanguinity, a family of warriors: their tenderest pledges are near them in the field. In the heat of the engagement the soldier hears the shrieks of his wife and the cries of his children These are the darling witnesses of his conduct, the applauders of his valour, at once beloved and valued. The wounded seek their mothers and their wives; undismayed at the sight the women count each honourable scar, and suck the gushing blood; they are even hardy enough to mix with the combatants, administering refreshment, and exhorting them to deeds of valour."[d]

**half to build and half to guard**

16—18. (16) **half . . work,** *etc.*, no doubt divided acc. to ability as well as numbers. Judicious ch. organisation needful to success. **habergeon,** *see* Ex. xxviii. 32. **rulers . . Judah,** head-quarters. (17) **every . . weapon,**[a] perh. fig. express.; perh. the meaning is that workers and fighters alternated. (18) **builders . . builded,** ready both to work or fight. **he . . me,** to give the appointed signals, *v.* 20.

*Division of duty.*—I. If all men performed the same kind of duty, many duties would be left undone. II. If men always selected their own duties, the distribution of workers would be often disproportionate to the work to be done. III. Men in the discharge of one duty should not think lightly of the duty performed by others, or imagine the calling of others more honourable than their own. IV. In the distribution of work the fitness of the worker should be considered. V. All real work, whatever its nature, is honourable.

*Bravery in work.*—Charles the Twelfth, King of Sweden, whilst besieged in Stralsund, was one day dictating a letter to his secretary, when a bombshell from the enemy's works fell upon the house in which he was, broke through the roof, and

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the people guard and watch, and work

*a* Note the advice of Nestor to Agamemnon; and also disposition of Athenian troops at Marathon.

*b* Nu. xiv. 9; De. i. 29, x. 17.

*c* Job v. 12.

*v.* 14. *R. Dickenson*, 283; *Dr. J. Gardiner*, 1.

"This is a maxim which I have received by hereditary tradition, not only from my father, but also from my grandfather and his ancestors, that after what I owe to God, nothing should be more dear or more sacred than the love and respect I owe to my country."—*De Thou.*

*d Tacitus.*

half to build and half to guard

*a* "Dextra tenet calamum, strictum tenet altera ferrum."—*Ovid.* There is, for every one of us, a world to be overcome; flesh to be subdued to the spirit; Satan to be resisted; Christ to be glorified. There is a work which is great, difficult, and continuous. Every day brings its proper work; every relation of life brings its duties; every opportunity

burst close to the apartment. The adjoining floor was shivered to pieces; but his own room was uninjured. The report of the shell, however, which seemed to crush the whole house to pieces, alarmed the secretary: and his pen fell from his hand. "What's the matter?" said the king to him, with a composed countenance. "Why do you not continue writing?" "Most gracious sire," replied the latter—"the bombshell!" "Well," said the king, "what has the bombshell to do with the letter? Go on with the writing."

19—23. (19) **we . . another,** a thin line of defenders, much spread out. (20) **place . . us,** the trumpet was to be blown where the attack was imminent. (21) **half . . appeared,** there were no short-timers here. (22) **let . . Jerusalem,** *see v.* 12, danger to builders by going far from city. **that . . us,** and safer for them also. **and . . day,** workmen should not live too far fr. their work. (23) **none . . clothes,** disregard of personal comfort. **saving . . washing,**[a] personal ablutions and religious purifications attended to.

*The appointed signal.*—I. While at work, God's servants are often separated widely from each other. Thus missionaries in their fields of labour. Men of the same town, and who studied side by side at college, are often in toil far asunder. II. When the trumpet of the last day is blown, the army of workers will be gathered together. III. Let us try to do our work well, and toil patiently, and listen earnestly for the signal that shall tell us that our warfare is accomplished, and our toils are over.

*Working men.*—It is not given to all to be masters of song, like Burns; of art like Palissy or Gibson; of engineering skill, like Stephenson; of critical acumen, like Gifford; or of abstract science, like Ferguson or the elder Herschel; yet these, at first, were all poor or working men, who gained their education by their own efforts—who did battle with pinching poverty, lack of educational means, prejudice of class, and all those lions which stand in the way of men of weaker mould, who let "I dare not" wait upon "I would." All cannot be field-marshals in the army of life: but somewhat lower, yet very honourable grades, have been obtained by men once in the ranks, who, while never for a moment despising the labour by which they gained honest bread, were not disposed to consider that working, eating, and sleeping are all that is worth living for. Their daily labour honestly and intelligently performed, they felt themselves to be free citizens of the empire of thought, in which true men take rank according to what they essentially are, quite independently of the conditions of their life. When the sun shines, it shines for all, lord or labourer; and the precious instincts which make men believe in good and beautiful things, treasure up and nourish the suggestions of universal nature, and cultivate the talents entrusted to their care, are bestowed as impartially as the sunshine. Look into any biographical dictionary, and you will see how little the circumstances of early life have been able to impede the careers of really great men. Real mental energy soon masters them, and makes them even subservient to its will.—*Regard for the poor.*—On one occasion, as the Rev. Edmund Jones was returning home over the mountains, from places where he had been dispensing the word of life, he accidentally met a poor creature, almost naked, and perishing with cold. Such an object could not fail to

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brings its own responsibility. But the forgetful hearer never sets about the great work of the Christian life in real earnest: he seems to have no idea that what he hears is meant to influence his practice.

**the pre-concerted signal**

[a] Or, "Every one went with his weapon for water" (Jud. v. 11).

"Nehemiah's vigilance anticipated every difficulty—his prudent measures defeated every obstruction, and with astonishing rapidity this Jerusalem was made again 'a city fortified.'"—*Dr. Jamieson.*

*v.* 21. "Thus did the people labour from the earliest dawn till the latest glimpse of evening light. 'Well, Tamly, have you found your cattle?' 'Found them? no! and I wandered from the rising east, till the stars appeared.' 'At what time do you intend to leave the temple?' 'Not till the stars appear.' 'When do you expect the guests?' 'Immediately when the stars appear.'"—*Roberts.*

"Make the most of time, it flies away so fast; yet method will teach you to save time."—*Go the.*

"Oh! what a thing, ye gods, is scorn or pity;

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heap on me, heaven, the heat of all mankind, load me with envy, malice, detestation; let me be horrid to all apprehension; let the world shun me, so I 'scape but scorn."—*Lee.*

*b Whitecross.*

work upon the tender sympathies of his heart. Having no money, he actually stripped himself of his shirt, and what other clothes he could spare, and gave them to him; and after conversing with him about the state of his soul, and commending the miserable creature to God in prayer, he pursued his journey. As soon as he entered his house, Mrs. Jones was alarmed at his extraordinary appearance, and hastily inquired if anything disastrous had happened to him. The good man soon quieted her fears, by relating the particulars of what had occurred. "You did well, my dear," said she; "you have other clothes to put on; let us be thankful to God that we are not in the poor man's circumstances."[b]

## *CHAPTER THE FIFTH.*

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**complaints of debt, mortgage, and bondage**

**1—5. (1) cry . . Jews,** internal strife now increased the toil of the great reformer.[a] (2) **take up,** or buy, as *v.* 3; having no means of living they asked for rations. (3) **we . . lands,** *etc.*, to such extremities were they reduced. (4) **we . . tribute,** *etc.*, borrowed upon usury, *v.* 7, contrary to law.[b] (5) **yet . . brethren,**[c] we, the poor, are of the same ancestry as the rich. **neither . . them,**[d] hence their appeal to Neh.

*Unbrotherly oppression.*—I. The text teaches us that men of the same church who are giving up much for the Lord should be dealt with with consideration. II. That even good men are apt to be forgetful of the claims of others, in their creed, and worldly carefulness. III. That love of money is apt to blind us to social claims.

*Disinterested poverty.*—In the hard frost of the year 1740, the benevolent Duke of Montague went out one morning in disguise, as was his favourite practice, in order to distribute his bounty to his afflicted fellow-creatures. He descended into one of those subterraneous dwellings of which there are many in London, and, accosting an old woman, inquired "How she lived in these hard times, and if she wanted charity?" "No," she replied; "she thanked God, she was not in want; but if he had anything to bestow, there was a poor creature in the next room almost starving." The duke visited this poor object, made a donation, and then inquired of the old woman "if any more of her neighbours were in want?" She said "Her left-hand neighbour was very poor, and very honest." "Sure," replied the duke, "you are very generous and disinterested; pray, if it is no offence, let me know your own circumstances." "I owe nothing," said the good woman, "and am worth thirty shillings." "Well, but I suppose a little addition would be acceptable." "Yes, certainly, but I think it wrong to take what others want so much more than I do." The duke took out five guineas, and desired her acceptance of them. The poor creature was quite overcome by this mark of generosity, and, when able to express herself, exclaimed, "Oh! sir, you are not a man, but an angel."—*God's care of the poor.*—A pious woman used to say she should never want, because her God would supply her every need. In a time of persecution, she was taken before an unjust judge for attending a conventicle, as they styled her offence. The judge, on seeing her, rejoiced over her, and tauntingly said—"I have often wished to have you in my power, and now I shall send you to prison, and then how will

"The rank is but the guinea's stamp, the man's the gold for all that."—*Burns.*

*c* Is. lviii. 7.

*d* Ex. xxi. 7; Le. xxv. 39.

On whole cap., see *Bp. Hall, Cont.*

"Some have estates and no children to inherit them; others have children and no estates to leave them: those that have both, have reason to be thankful; those that have neither, may the better be content."—*M. Henry.*

"Covetousness, by a greediness of getting more, deprives itself of the true end of getting; it loses the enjoyment of what is got."—*Sprat.*

"To save his only care: so things seem right, no matter what they are."—*Churchill.*

you be fed?" She replied, "If it be my heavenly Father's pleasure, I shall be fed from your table." And that was literally the case; for the judge's wife being present at her examination, and being greatly struck with the good woman's firmness, took care to send her victuals from her table, so that she was comfortably supplied all the while she was in confinement: and the other found her reward, for the Lord was pleased to work on her soul, to her real conversion.[e]

6—8. (6) **angry**, righteous indignation. (7) **then . . myself**, *Heb.* my heart consulted in me. **usury**,[a] see *v.* 11. **brother**, fellow-citizen. **set . . them**,[b] refer the matter to large and influential gathering. (8) **will . . brethren**, *etc.*, are we to hold in bondage those who by birthright are free? **then . . answer**, this was better than quibbling.

*Love in a cottage.*—During a dreadful famine in Germany, a poor family, consisting of a man, his wife, and four children, were reduced to the last extremity, and on the very point of being starved to death. Knowing no other method of relief the husband proposed that one of the children should be sold, so that they might procure bread for themselves and the remaining children. To this painful proposal the wife at last reluctantly consented. It was then necessary to consider which of the four should be sold. The eldest was first mentioned, but neither of the parents could think of that: the dear child was their first-born; they could not possibly part with him. The second child was then produced; but the mother objected: the boy was the very picture of his father; she could not spare him. The third, a charming girl, came next in turn; but the father made a similar objection: the dear child bore a strong resemblance to her mother; she must not go. Well, only one remained, the youngest appeared. But here both of them united to say, "We cannot part with him, this is our Benjamin, the darling child of our age. No, we will rather perish altogether, than part with any of our dear children."—*Poverty* versus *wealth*.—But then, the degrading influences of labour, of slavery, and low, contemptible, torturing cares; the want of intellectual cultivation,—ay, even of mere animal enjoyments; the self-contempt, which is but the echo of the world's verdict,—all these, perpetuated from generation to generation, are able at last to vulgarise and deteriorate the type of the species; and the worst of it is, that the soul is vulgarised in the long run as well as the body. On the other hand, the habit of ascendency and freedom, the consciousness of a recognised elevation, the comparative exemption from suffering, and pain, and sorrow, eventually produce a superior animal. The analogy holds good through all creation. But again, after the acme comes the decline. The inevitable and uniform cycle of growth, maturity, and decay, is one through which all things—individuals, families, and nations—are ever passing; and when the descendants of the master mind and the conquering arm become drones, or dunces, or idiots, then, why then let them sink to their level—down to the clay from which all originally rose.[c]

9—11. (9) **ought . . enemies**,[a] the people of God were, in their individual character, and political affairs to be a pattern to other nations. (10) **might . . corn**, wh. he had lent at some

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"He deservedly loses his own property who covets that of another."—*Phædrus.*

*e Whitecross.*

**an assembly is called**

*a* Ex. xxii. 25; Le. xxv. 36; Ma. xxv. 27. Usury, from Lat. *usura*, Fr. *usure*, formerly denoted interest, or a sum paid for the *use* of money; now applied to excessive exactions of that kind.

*b* De. xxxiii. 4; Ma. xviii. 17; 1 Cor. vi. 1—4.

*v.* 7. *Dr. Payson*, iii. 180.

"It is the usual plea of poverty to blame misfortune, when the ill-finished cause of complaint is a work of their own forging. I will either make my fortunes good, or be content they are no worse. If they are not so good as I would they should have been, they are not so bad as I know they might have been. What though I am not so happy as I desire? 'tis well I am not so wretched as I deserve."—*Warwick.*

"Never marry but for love: but see that thou lovest what is lovely."—*Penn.*

*c Owyan.*

**the usurers are rebuked**

*a* Le. xxv. 36; 2 Sa. xii. 14; Ro.

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ii. 24; 1 Pet. ii. 12.

*b* "Volneys tells us that the usual rate of interest in Syria, in his time, was 20 per cent."—*Trav.* ii. 410.

*v.* 11. *R. Capel, Tentations*, 1636.

"Those who have great families and little substance, must learn to live by faith in God's providence and promise; and those who have little families and great substance, must make their abundance a supply for other's want." — *M. Henry.*

"The pulpit only 'teaches' to be honest; the market place 'trains' to over-reaching and fraud; and teaching has not a tithe of the efficiency of training. Christ never wrote a tract, but He went about doing good." — *Horace Mann.*

*c G. Mogridge.*

"After all the good instruction that can be given, example must go hand in hand with precept. If children receive solemn injunctions against a vice which they see their parents practise, or exhortation to the performance of a duty they see them neglect, the precept will be more likely to excite ridicule in the youthful mind than observance."—*Mrs. King.*

time; he wd. not make a rule that he was unwilling to obey. (11) **hundredth**, = to 12 per cent. per an. bec. paid monthly.*b*

*The cost of a good example.*—I. To set a good example should be the aim of a servant of God. II. For the sake of doing this it will be necessary to sometimes forego one's personal advantage. III. One should be willing to surrender profit and gain in order that the mind of the worldly man may be impressed with the spirit of the Gospel. IV. Thus the world may learn that a Christian regards brotherly love, and the property of the poor, as of greater importance than his own personal gain.

*The voice of example.*—A man was once boasting to another of being a constant church-goer. "Give me," said he, "one that attends to the duties of the Sabbath, for he is the only one to be trusted through the week. I never neglect going to church myself, hail or shine, wet or dry, winter or summer; you know, when you have been at church, you have always seen me in my pew." "I have," replied the other, "and so sure as you have been there, so sure have I seen you fast asleep in the corner of it."—Two well-dressed persons, walking along the street on a bleak winter's day, met a poor old woman shivering in a thin shawl, instead of being wrapped up in a good warm cloak. One of them stopped to speak to her, pitied her very much, told her that her clothes were not at all fit for winter, and that he liked to see poor people taken care of. Again and again he told her how sorry he was for her condition, and ended all his remarks by promising to give her sixpence when he next met her. The other person, though he never so much as opened his mouth, was seen to slip, in a quiet way, a half-crown into the poor woman's hand.—Some labouring men who suspected a companion of drinking oftener than he ought to do at the wooden bottle, put a little black paint round the mouth of it. The drinker, as usual, slily embraced the first opportunity of taking a long draught at the bottle, being altogether ignorant of what his comrades had done. Presently there was a cry that somebody had been at the wooden bottle, when the drinker, with a black ring round his lips, bawled out that he was innocent of it as the child that was unborn. "We might have believed you," replied his companions, "only loud as your tongue is, your lips are a great deal louder."*c*—*Power of example.*—The ancient Romans were accustomed to place the busts of their distinguished ancestors in the vestibules of their houses, that they might be continually reminded of their noble deeds. They supposed that a recollection of their illustrious virtues would lead to the imitation of the same by all the living members of their households. There is no doubt that the influence of this practice was most happy upon the living, awakening in many breasts high and noble aspirations. At any rate, history records the names of many renowned Romans, who descended from the families in which this custom was observed. The young grew up to reverence the worthies whose statues they daily saw, and to emulate the virtues which gave their ancestors such lasting fame. We can easily conceive how the sight of these images, as the young went out and came in, day after day, and week after week, would impress their hearts for good. The impression of a single day therefrom, though very small in itself, yet oft repeated, could not fail to be deep. In these days we have no busts of honoured ancestors in the porches of our dwellings, but we have something

more impressive. The characters of living parents are constantly presented for the imitation of children. Their example is continually sending forth a silent power to mould young hearts for good or ill; not for a single month or year, but through the whole impressible period of childhood and youth, the influence of parental example is thus felt. If it be constituted of the highest and purest elements, the results will be unspeakably precious. Sons and daughters will become patterns of propriety and goodness, because their parents are such. The former will be as "plants grown up in their youth," and the latter as "corner-stones polished after the similitude of a palace."

**12, 13.** (12) **will . . them,** in way of interest. **priests . . promise,**[a] oath to confirm their words; and priests as witnesses, that the oath might be regarded as more solemn and binding. All this shows some distrust of them. (13) **lap,** bosom;[b] *i.e.* of the garment.[c]

*The promise kept.*—I. Observe that the promise was extorted from the people by the arguments of a good man. II. It was made with the knowledge of the loss that would be entailed. III. Although so extorted, and made with this knowledge, it was kept. IV. It was made and kept for example's sake.

*The lap.*—Instead of the fibula that was used by the Romans, the Arabs join together with a thread, or with a wooden bodkin, the two upper corners of this garment; and after having placed them first over one of their shoulders, they then fold the rest of it about their bodies. The outer fold serves them frequently instead of an apron, in which they carry herbs, loaves, corn, and other articles, and may illustrate several allusions made to it in Scripture: thus, "One of the sons of the prophets went out into the field, to gather herbs, and found a wild vine, and gathered there of wild gourds *his lapful*." And the Psalmist offers up his prayer, that Jehovah would "render unto his neighbours sevenfold into their bosom, their reproach." The same allusion occurs in our Lord's direction to His disciples: "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom." It was also the fold of this robe which Nehemiah shook before his people as a significant emblem of the manner in which God should deal with the man who ventured to violate his oath and promise to restore the possessions of their impoverished brethren: "Also, I shook my lap, and said, So God shake out every man from his house, and from his labour, that performeth not this promise, even thus be he shaken out and emptied."[d]

**14, 15.** (14) **from . . king,**[a] the date of Neh.'s return to Persia: *i.e.* fr. B.C. 483 to 445. **have . . governor,**[b] did exact the salary due to his office as governor. (15) **taken . . silver,** prob. "bread and wine to the value of 40 shekels," is meant **so . . God,** bec. he feared a just and merciful God, and neither oppressed himself nor suffered his servants to oppress.[c]

*The fear of God a principle of action.*—Now it will be no unedifying subject if we consider—I. The principle by which he was actuated. By the fear of the Lord we are to understand—1. A respect to His Word as the rule of our conduct; 2. His authority as the reason of our conduct; 3. His glory as the end of our conduct. Such being the principle by which Nehemiah

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"Whatever parent gives his children good instruction, and sets them at the same time a bad example may be considered as bringing them food in one hand and poison in the other."—*Bulgay.*

**they promise amendment**

*a* Ezr. x. 5; Jer. xxxiv. 8, 9.

*b* Lat. *sinum*; for example of the *effusio sinûs* as a symbolic act, see *Livy*, xxi. 18. See Ps. cxxix. 7; Isa. xlix. 22; Ru. iii. 15. Comp. also metaphor of a sling, 1 Sa. xxv. 29; girdle, Jer. xiii. 9–11; pitcher, Jer. xix. 10, 11.

*c* Mat. x. 14; Ac. xiii. 51, xviii. 6.

"The corruption of the positively wicked is often less sad and fatal to society than the irregularities of a virtuous man who yields and falls."—*Desmahis.*

Good example is a language, and an argument which everybody understands.

*d* *Paxton.*

**Nehemiah took no income of the people**

*a* See xiii. 6.

*b* 1 Co. ix. 4, 15.

*c* "When the servants of governors oppress the people, it is their master's doing, or, at least, their suffering."—*Bp. Sanderson*, ii. 237.

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was actuated, let us notice—II. The effect it produced on his life and conversation, which should teach us the following lessons. 1. Not to conform ourselves to any custom till we have examined it with care; 2. Not to suffer ourselves to be biassed by any personal interests in forming our judgment of doubtful matters; 3. Not to fear condemning what our consciences do not approve.

*Note on v.* 15.—It is evident something oppressive is meant. And that it related to the taking bread from them, or eatables in general, together with wine, perhaps sheep, fowls, pigeons, butter, fruit, and other things, when probably they were travelling, or sojourning in some place at a distance from home. And that the like imperious and unrighteous demand had, from time to time, been made upon them by the servants of these governors, whom they might have occasion to send about the country. I cannot account for the setting down the precise number of forty, when speaking of shekels, but by supposing that the word *besides*, here, *acher*, should have been translated *afterward*, which it more commonly, if not more certainly, signifies; and means, that afterward they were wont to commute this demand for provisions into money, often amounting to forty shekels. It is certain it would not mean the whole annual allowance to the governor by the children of the captivity; that would have been much too small; nor could it mean what every householder was to pay annually towards the governor's support, for fifty shekels was as much as each mighty man of wealth was assessed at by Menahem, when he wanted to raise a large sum of money for the king of Assyria, and when Israel was not in so low a state as in the time of Nehemiah; it must then, surely, mean the value of that quantity of eatables and wine they might charge any town with, when single towns were charged with the support of the governor's table for a single repast, or a single day, which it is natural to suppose could only be when they thought fit to travel from place to place. This, it seems, their servants took the liberty too to require, when they were sent on a journey. And if they that belonged to the officers of the king of Persia enforced their requisitions in a manner similar to that made use of by the people belonging to the Turkish governors of provinces, when they travel on a public account among the Greeks of Moldavia, it is no wonder that Nehemiah observes, with emotion, in this passage, "*Yea, even their servants bare rule over the people: but so did not I, because of the fear of God.*"[d]

r. 15. Forty shekels of silver per day would equal £1,800 a year.
*v.* 15. *W. Bridge*, ii. 422; *Dr. W. Cooper*, ii. 225; *J. Scales*, ii. 449; *T. Gibborne*, 259; *Preacher*, iii. 81; *Dr. I. Milner*, ii. 364.
"Be more prudent for your children than pernaps you have been for yourself. When they, too, are parents they will imitate you, and each of you will have prepared happy generations, who will transmit, together with your memory, the worship of your wisdom." — *La Beaume.*
"Those that with diligence fight against poverty, though neither conquer till death makes it a drawn battle, expect not, but prevent, their craving of thee: for God forbid the heavens should never rain till the earth first opens her mouth, seeing some grounds will sooner burn than chap"—*Fuller.*
*d Harmer.*

**but supported himself and his house**

**16—19.** (16) **I . . wall,** nor thought **of** personal gain. Attended exclusively to public work, without thought of private speculations. **neither . . land,**[a] esp. of those who, through poverty, were forced to sell. **all . . work,** they, too, were similarly employed. (17) **at . . rulers,**[b] he abstained fr. all emolument, and observed the rites of hospitality. **beside . . us,** returning good for evil. (18) **which . . daily,** *etc.*, Neh. must have been a rich man to have continued this for so many years. **because . . people,** the tribute was heavy, and the people were employed in great labours. (19) **think,** *etc.*, Neh. thought of the recompense of the reward.

*a* See *Juvenal*, viii. 107, on the conduct of Rom. governors.
*b* 2 Sa. ix. 7; 1 K. xviii. 19.
*c* 1 K. iv. 22.
*v.* 18. *Th. Bradbury*, i. 371; *Dr. J. Jortin*, i. 65.
"There are bad examples which are worse than

*The heathen cast down.*—I. What was it that so cast them down? Not defeats in the battle-field, but perseverance in a holy work under great difficulties. II. What is the lesson for us that we may learn from this casting down of the heathen?

Not to fight them with the sword, but to continue our work with the trowel. III. Religious agitators may learn hence that the best way to confound opponents is to persevere in the work of the Lord.

*The governor's table.*—Nehemiah calculated the expenses of his table not by the money he paid, but by the provisions consumed by his guests. Such is still the practice in the East. So De la Motraye informs us of the seraglio at Constantinople: "One may judge of the numbers who live in this palace by the prodigious quantity of provisions consumed in it yearly, which some of the hattchis, or cooks, assured me amounted to more than 30,000 oxen, 20,000 calves, 60,000 sheep, 16,000 lambs, 10,000 kids, 100,000 turkeys, geese, and goslings, 200,000 fowls and chickens, 100,000 pigeons, without reckoning wild-fowl or fish, of the last of which he only named 130,000 calcam-bats, or turbots."[d]

*Public dinners.*—Our ancestors were certainly more domestic than we are in the present day; for the gentlemen and tradesmen a century ago either remained at home with their families, or if they went out it was to some social club. In times of yore they never thought of congregating with ladies at a rout, or assembling by hundreds for the mere purpose of eating and drinking. But now there is scarcely a single object upon which men associate that does not produce dinners in abundance. Political, charitable, literary, and even religious bodies, all seem to think dining together an essential bond of union. At these meetings men are assembled who often have no personal acquaintance or any other points of intercommunity than the single one which has brought them together. A great man is placed in the chair, who is expected to deliver something like a speech. He is followed by some volunteer orators, who are usually prolix and noisy in proportion to their emptiness. A bad dinner is served to a hungry crowd, eagerly grasping at the dishes within their reach, amidst an intolerable clatter of plates and din of guests and waiters. Toasts, with three times three, succeed the removal of the cloth. Hired singers entertain the company with loyal and bacchanalian strains; and such as can bear the Babel of noises stay till they have swallowed wine enough to make a good bargain of their tickets; while the quiet and sober slink off to their homes, perhaps repeating from Soame Jenyns,

> "Afflict us not, ye gods! tho' sinners,
> With many days like this, and dinners."

Such are the generality of our society festivals, which may do honour to the national character in the eye of strangers, but contribute little to improve our manners. Public spirit, or, at least, the corporate spirit, may be invigorated by them; but as this is an advantage common to all parties, no one cause receives the benefit. With respect to charitable institutions, as it enhances the expense attending them it can scarcely conduce to their ultimate benefit. The Quakers, who are the most active supporters of all useful charities, do not require such a stimulus for their exertions.[e]—*A glutton of the old time.*—When Vitellius, a Roman emperor, and a notorious glutton, who at one supper had before him two thousand fishes, and seven thousand birds, was in prospect of death, he made himself intoxicated, that he might not be sensible of its pains, or of the mighty change it produced.

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crimes; and more states have perished from the violation of morality than from the violation of law."—*Montesquieu.*

*d Burder.*

"The turnpike-road to people's hearts, I find, lies through their mouths; or I mistake mankind."—*Dr. Warton.*

It is not the quality of the viands, but the cheerfulness of the guests which makes the feast.

"He was a kind and thankful toad, whose heart dilated in proportion as his skin was filled with good cheer; and whose spirits rose with eating, as some men's do with drink. He could not help, too, rolling his large eyes round him as he ate, and chuckling with the possibility that he might one day be lord of all this scene of unimaginable luxury."—*Washington Irving.*

"Gluttony is the source of all our infirmities, and the fountain of all our diseases. As a lamp is choked by a superabundance of oil, a fire extinguished by excess of fuel, so is the natural heat of the body destroyed by intemperate diet."—*Burton.*

*e Percy Anec.*

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the craft of the enemy

*a* 1 Ch. viii. 12.

*b* *Vandevelde.*

*c* Ps. xxxvii. 12, 32; Pr. xxvi. 24, 25.

*r.* 3. *A. Fuller,* 695.

"The deceitful smiles of the world generally form our first temptation in the path of duty. But if we steadily withstand them and will not be diverted from our work, we must prepare for reproaches, slanders, and menaces, from the same quarter."—*Scott.*

"It has been a sort of maxim that the greatest art is to conceal art; but I know not how, among people we meet with, their greatest cunning is to appear cunning."—*Steele.*

"Cunning is none of the best nor worst qualities; it floats between virtue and vice; there is scarce any exigence where it may not, and perhaps ought not to be supplied by prudence."—*Bruyère.*

"George III. was a man of firm mind. His speech on the Roman Catholic question shows his character: 'I can give up my crown, and retire from power; I can quit my palace, and live in a cottage; I can lay my head on

## *CHAPTER THE SIXTH.*

**1—4.** (1) **Sanballat,** *etc.*, see ii. 19, iv. 7. **no breach, no** part left unbuilded. **though . . gates,** the gate-houses were built, but the gates themselves were not hung. (2) **eno,** nr. Lydda.[a] Perh. at *Kefr-Anna*, ab. 8 ms. E. of Jaffa, and 6 ms. N. of Lydda.[b] They tried to accomplish by deceit what they failed to effect by threats and opposition. **but . . mischief,**[c] Neh. is astute enough to see through the proposition. (3) **sent,** instead of going as they desired. **I . . work,** they could not propose a greater or better. **so . . down,** to leave a great religious duty is a moral coming down. **why . . cease,** he courteously assumes that the only evil that would result fr. his accepting the invitation would be the retarding of the work. (4) **sent . . sort,** to show their earnestness.

*Nehemiah's firmness.*—How he baffled the attempts of his enemies we are told in the passage now before us. From whence I shall take occasion to show—I. What efforts men will make to divert us from the service of God; and, as in the instance before us, those enemies will endeavour to prevail—1. By artifice; 2. By intimidation; 3. By ridicule. But in the example of this holy man we see—II. In what manner we should withstand them. Two things in particular I would notice. 1. His wisdom; 2. His firmness. Let us learn from hence—(1) What we are to expect if we will serve God; (2) How we must act if we would approve ourselves to Him.

*The Arabs of modern Palestine.*—This interesting question is discussed by Mrs. Finn, in the *Sunday at Home*, and she has brought together a large amount of evidence which tends to prove that these are the descendants of the nations (or at least a part) which were the aborigines of Palestine, at the time of the Exodus. Their history, under the various names of Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites Jebusites, and Amorites, is clearly traceable in the Old Testament narrative down to the time of Nehemiah and Ezra. Subsequent events rather favoured their increase, than tended to their extermination: they were a trouble to the Israelites in the time of the Maccabees, as we read. So that, even in the days of our Lord, the rural population of Palestine was largely Canaanitish and heathen. The fall of Jerusalem, and the severities inflicted upon the Jews, produced no ill effects upon the Canaanites, and in after years the distinctions between the different races or tribes were lost or overlooked, and they became known by the general name of "Syrians." On their present state, Mrs. Finn remarks:—"Though the language and religion of the Arabs are found in Palestine, their Mohammedanism is but nominal. The people are grossly ignorant of the Koran and its tenets; they practise their old customs, short only of actual idolatry. That they are not Arabs, as the Bedaween are Arabs, is certain. They differ from them physically, as well as in speech and in most of their habits. That these *fellaheen* had lived in the land from remote antiquity will scarcely be doubted by any one familiar with their manners and customs. It is also a fact that the peasantry are divided into separate clans, very distinct from each other, very commonly at feud

with each other, and that these clans may well be fragments of older and distinct nations." A moderate amount of careful research, as Mrs. Finn shows, can scarcely fail to throw light upon the subject, and we may hope that both residents in, and visitors to, the Holy Land will keep the matter in view.

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a block, and lose my life; but I can *not* break my oath."—*Twiss.*

**5—7.** (5) **fifth . . letter,** the previous had been private communications. This is of the nature of a threat. **open,** that all might read it. (6) **reported,** heathen, and the more likely to be false, bec. reported fr. such a quarter. **Gashmu,** or Geshem. **that . . rebel . . king,** and yet Sanballat, who insinuates the charge, wished, so he averred, to be friendly with the rebel. (7) **appointed . . Judah,**[a] *see* 14, not unusual for the wicked to charge on others sins of wh. they are guilty. **it . . words,** though it be only a report, the truth of wh. was not proven.

*Letters in the East.*—Norden tells us that when he and his company were at Essauen an express arrived there, despatched by an Arab prince, who brought a letter directed to the reys, or master of their barque, enjoining him not to set out with his barque, or carry them any farther, adding that in a day's time he should be at Essauen and there would give his orders relative to them. "The letter, however, according to the usage of the Turks," says this author, "was open; and as the reys was not on board, the pilot carried it to one of our fathers to read it." Sanballat's sending his servant, then, with an open letter, which is mentioned in Neh. vi. 5, doth not appear an odd thing, it should seem; but if it was according to their usages, why is this circumstance complained of, as it visibly is? Why, indeed, is it mentioned at all? Why! because, however the sending letters open to common people may be customary in these countries, it is not according to their usages to send them so to people of distinction. So Dr. Pocock, in his account of that very country where Norden was when this letter was brought, gives us, among other things, in the 57th plate, the figure of a Turkish letter put into a satin bag, to be sent to a great man, with a paper tied to it, directed and sealed, and an ivory button tied on the wax. So, Lady Montague says, the bassa of Belgrade's answer to the English ambassador, going to Constantinople, was brought to him in a purse of scarlet satin.—*Zeal in religious enterprise.*—A baronet was one day examining some works of the celebrated sculptor, Mr. Bacon, and observed a bust of Mr. Whitefield among them, which led him to remark, "After all that has been said, this was truly a great man: he was the founder of a new religion." "A new religion, sir!" replied Mr. B. "Yes," said the baronet; "what do you call it?" "Nothing," was the reply, "but the old religion revived with new energy, and treated as if the preacher meant what he said."

the open teller

[a] Ac. xvii. 7.

In W. Asia, letters, after being rolled up like a map, are flattened to the breadth of an inch, and, instead of being sealed, are pasted at the ends. In E. Asia, the Persians make up their letters in the form of a roll about six inches long, and a bit of paper is fastened round it with gum, and sealed with an impression of ink, which resembles our printer's ink, but it is not so thick. Letters were, and are still, sent to persons of distinction in a bag or purse, and even to equals they are enclosed, the tie being made with a coloured ribbon; but to inferiors, or persons who are to be treated contemptuously, the letters were sent open, or not enclosed in a bag.

**8, 9.** (8) **there . . heart,** a bold, honest, straightforward answer. (9) **they . . afraid,** tried to do so; Neh. was not frightened. **now . . hands,** prayer was his common resource, and God his constant helper.

*The toiler's prayer.*—"Strengthen my hands." I. Consider how many things tend to weaken them—as the increasing claims of home, as the growing infirmities of age, as the fluctuations in trade and labour's reward. II. The source of the workman's strength. Not strikes; but God. III. How God strengthens

Nehemiah's bold reply

"It is common for that which is the sense only of the malicious, to be falsely represented by them as the sense of the many."—*M. Henry.*

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"False praise can please, and calumny affright none but the vicious and the hypocrite."—*Horace.*

*a F. W. Robertson*

"Be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny." — *Shakespeare.*

"The slanderer does harm to three persons at once: to him of whom he says the ill, to him to whom he says it, and, most of all, to himself in saying it." — *St. Basil.*

"I never listen to calumnies, because, if they are untrue, I run the risk of being deceived, and if they be true, of hating persons not worth thinking about."—*Montesquieu.*

*b R. T. S.*

the craft of Shemaiah

*a* Ez. xiii. 22; Ps. lvi. 2, 3.

*b* Ps. lxii. 4; Ez. xiii. 17; 2 Ti. iv. 14.

"Our firmness will be called obstinacy; our zeal rashness; and our activity ambition: nay, we shall be warned that we are about to affront all our friends, and turn them into enemies; and to bring ourselves into dangers and difficulties, from

the workman's hands. By providentially introducing inventions; by increasing skill; by raising up helpers; by restoring health; by infusing cheerfulness into the mind; by granting success.

*The evils of calumny.*—It is like the Greek fire used in ancient warfare, which burnt unquenched beneath the water; or like the weeds, which, when you have extirpated them in one place, are sprouting forth vigorously in another spot, at the distance of many hundred yards; or, to use the metaphor of St. James, it is like the wheel which catches fire as it goes, and burns with fierce conflagration as its own speed increases: "It sets on fire the whole course of nature" (literally the wheel of nature).[a] *Mistakes of calumniators illustrated.*—A lawyer, who was sometimes forgetful, having been engaged to plead the cause of an offender, began by saying: "I know the prisoner at the bar, and he bears the character of being a most consummate and impudent scoundrel ——" Here somebody whispered to him that the prisoner was his client, when he immediately continued: "But what great and good man ever lived who was not calumniated by many of his contemporaries?" — *Gustavus Adolphus.*—Of all the virtues which united in the character of Gustavus Adolphus, king of Sweden, that which crowned the whole was his exemplary piety. The following fact is related of him when he was once in his camp before Werben. He had been alone in the cabinet of his pavilion for some hours, and none of his attendants at these seasons were allowed to interrupt him. At length, however, a favourite of his, having some important matter to tell him, came softly to the door, and, looking in, beheld the king very devoutly on his knees at prayer. Fearing to molest him in that exercise, he was about to withdraw, when the king saw him, and bidding him to come in, said, "Thou wonderest to see me in this posture, since I have so many thousands of subjects to pray for me; but I tell thee that no man has more need to pray for himself than he who, having to render an account of his actions to none but God, is for that reason more closely assaulted by the devil than all other men besides."[b]

**10—14.** (10) **Shemaiah** (*Jehovah heareth him*), a bad man with a good name; a common name, for there are 20 ref. to in Scripture who bore it. **who . . up,** pretending to be a prisoner of Sanballat through his friendship for Neh. **let . . temple,** as if the place would prove his sincerity, or sanctify the deed. **yea . . thee,** this might have resulted in the assassination of Neh. (11) **should . . flee,** *etc.*, he who is doing God's work by a special call may expect to be kept in safety without neglecting his work to save his life. (12) **perceived,**[a] by reflection, or discovery of the plot. (13) **therefore,** for this reason. **afraid,** for my life. **and . . sin,** appear to be in a plot with the king's enemies. (14) **my . . works,**[b] Neh. commended the whole case to the direction of God.

*Christian firmness.*—I will take occasion from this particular occurrence to set before you—I. The subtlety with which our great adversary will assault us. He will propose to us—1. To neglect our social duties, with a view to the furtherance of our spiritual welfare; 2. To conform to the world with a view to conciliate their regard; 3. To use undue means with a view to the attainment of some desirable end. II. The firmness with

which we should resist him. We should set the Lord ever before us, bearing in mind—1. Our relation to Him; 2. Our obligation to Him; 3. Our expectations from Him; 4. The interest which God Himself has in the whole of our conduct. Learn—(1) To expect temptation; (2) To place your entire confidence in God in every circumstance.[c]

*Should such a man as I am flee?*—Cyprian, when on his way to suffer martyrdom, was told by the Emperor that he would give him time to consider whether he had not better cast a grain of incense into the fire, in honour of idols, than die so degraded a death. The martyr nobly answered, "There needs no deliberation in the case." John Huss, when at the stake, about to suffer for his attachment to Christ, was offered pardon if he would recant. His reply was, "I am here to suffer death." Ann Askew, when asked, under similar circumstances, to avoid the flames, answered, "I came not here to deny my Lord and Master." Mr. Thomas Hawkes, an Essex gentleman, said on a like occasion, "If I had a hundred bodies, I would suffer them all to be torn in pieces rather than recant."—*A West Indian negro.*—Two persons connected with Mr. Burchell's congregation at Montego Bay, Jamaica, had their houses levelled with the ground, their feet made fast in the stocks, and were sent in chains to the workhouse, charged with the heinous offence of praying to the God of heaven! One of these, however, they were absolutely obliged to give up in despair. Having nothing to do besides in the gaol, he spent his time, morning, noon, and night, singing and calling upon God; which so annoyed the gaoler, that he repeatedly went into his cell and flogged him. But the more flogging, the more praying; till at length the gaoler again brought him before the court for this offence. The poor man, however, resolutely declared his purpose to pray. "If you let me go," said he, "me will pray: if you keep me in prison, me will pray; if you flog me, me will pray; pray me must, and pray me will!" The gaoler was fairly confounded; and rather than be annoyed any longer by this "praying fellow," he gave up his fees, and a part of the fine was remitted; and so the man was dismissed, to "go and pray elsewhere."[d]

**15—19.** (15) **Elul,** the sixth mo. **in . . days,** one of the most extraordinary instances of rapid building on record. (16) **they . . eyes,**[a] this wd. be often the case if the Ch. were faithful and diligent. **they . . God,** so great a work, done so soon, with such small resources, under such great opposition. (17) **nobles . . them,** those hindered who should have been the most earnest helpers. (18) **Shecaniah,** Ezr. ii. 5. Hence their correspondence was plausible. (19) **reported . . me,** they tried to annoy him with praise of his enemies. **and . . him,**[b] revealed his plans and purposes[c] to the foe. **and . . fear,** wh., armed with private information, he thought he could do.

*The expedition with which the wall of Jerusalem was built.*—It will be profitable to inquire—I. How it was completed in so short a time. We find that the means whereby this great work was accomplished were—1. The wisdom and energy of the governor; 2. The union and perseverance of the people; 3. The peculiar blessing of their God. Having thus traced Nehemiah's success to its true cause, we proceed to set before you—II. The great lesson which we are to learn from it. Behold,

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which we cannot extricate ourselves unless we follow other counsels and act more circumspectly."—*Scott.*

*c C. Simeon, M.A.*

"When the senate informed Augustus of what some had said of him, 'Tush,' said he, 'we are not at leisure to listen to every slander that's raised of us.' A Christian should be (as is said of Severus the emperor) careful of what is to be done by him, but careless of what is said of him."—*Venning.*

"The worthiest persons are frequently attacked by slanders, as we generally find that to be the best fruit which the birds have been pecking at."—*Bacon.*

*d R. T. S.*

**the wall is finished**

*a* Ps. xiv. 15, cxxvi. 2, 3.
*b* Le. xix. 16; Pr. xx. 19, xxvi. 20.
*c Heb.* matters.

"Man has but one state of probation, and that of an exceeding short continuance; and, therefore, since he cannot serve God long, he should serve Him much; employ every minute of his life to the best advantage; thicken his devotions; hallow every day

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in his calendar by religious exercises, and every action in his life by holy reference and designments; for let him make what haste he can to be wise, Time will outrun him.' —*J. Norris.*

"God's work may be done, well done, and successfully, and yet different methods taken in doing it: which is a good reason why we should neither arraign others' management, nor make our own standard."—*M. Henry.*

A listless youth approached some fishermen, expressing a wish for a basket of fish. An old fisherman advised him to cast a line for himself. He did so, and soon found his wish gratified.

"Idleness travels very slowly, and poverty soon overtakes her." —*Hunter.*

*d J. Newton.*

then, in what way we are all to engage in the work of the Lord.

*The power of diligence.*—In summing up the character of a man like William Carey, due prominence should be given to his extraordinary diligence. Even the grammars he composed are too numerous for mentioning separately; and his Bengali lexicon fills three bulky quartos. When we add to these his many translations we have a sum of work such as only few are able to crowd into the fleeting days of mortal existence. Extremely frugal in diet, his tastes were refined, and next to philology his predilections tended towards the attractions of tropical nature, in whose delightful domains he continually found new allurements. While labouring so abundantly in teaching and translating, his luxuriant garden surpassed in rich completeness the most famous botanical collections of the empire. To what did he owe his amazing success? Being far too sensible a man not to know where lay his strength, he also knew his weaker points, but like all great minds, subjected by grace, he was extremely modest. "I can plod," he himself testified; "to this I owe everything. The plodder is the man who will rise to respect and eminence, and should he live sufficiently long to effect his designs, he will make the world his insolvent debtor."—*Diligence and labour.*—Cessator is not chargeable with being buried in the cares and business of this present life to the neglect of the one thing needful; but he greatly neglects the duties of his station. Had he been sent into the world only to read, pray, hear sermons, and join in religious conversation, he might pass for an eminent Christian. But though it is to be hoped that his abounding in these exercises springs from a heart-attachment to Divine things, his conduct evidences that his judgment is weak, and his views of his Christian calling are very narrow and defective. He does not consider, that waiting upon God in the public and private ordinances is designed not to excuse us from the discharge of the duties of civil life but to instruct, strengthen, and qualify us for their performance. His affairs are in disorder, and his family and connections are likely to suffer by his indolence. He thanks God that he is not worldly-minded; but he is an idle and unfaithful member of society, and causes the way of truth to be evil spoken of. Such the Apostle has determined, that "if any man will not work, neither should he eat."[d]

## *CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.*

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**the gates are set up**

*a* 1 Ch. ix. 17, 27.

*b* Neh x. 1, 23.

*c* Ex. xviii. 21.

"One reason why the bulk of the Jews (who were originally pastoral, and lovers of agriculture) might rather choose to

**1—4.** (1) **set . . doors,** left to the last, *see* vi. 1. **porters,** of the temp.[a] (2) **gave . . Hanani,**[b] i. 2. **palace,** fortress, ii. 8. **charge,** over the gates, etc. **feared . . many,**[c] a good qualification for office. One who feared God would be just towards man. (3) **until . . hot,** the day well begun, and light. **while . . by,** *etc.*, Hanani and Hananiah were personally to superintend the opening and closing of the doors. **every . . house,** guarding his house, he wd. also guard the city. This true of spiritual matters also. (4) **city . . great,** *Heb.* broad in spaces. **but . . builded,** hence needed the more careful watching.

*Closing the gates of Jerusalem.*—In the hot countries of the

East they frequently travel in the night, and arrive at midnight at the place of their destination (Lu. xi. 5; Mk. xiii. 35). Probably they did not therefore usually shut their gates at the going down of the sun, if they did so at all through the night. Thevenot could not, however, obtain admission into Suez in the night, and was forced to wait some hours in the cold without the walls. Doubdan, returning from the river Jordan to Jerusalem, in 1652, tells us that when he and his companions arrived in the valley of Jehoshaphat, they were much surprised to find that the gates of the city were shut, which obliged them to lodge on the ground, at the door of the sepulchre of the Blessed Virgin, to wait for the return of day, along with more than a thousand other people, who were obliged to continue there the rest of the night as well as they. At length, about four o'clock, seeing everybody making for the city, they also set forward, with the design of entering by St. Stephen's gate; but they found it shut, and above two thousand people, who were there in waiting, without knowing the cause of all this. At first they thought it might be too early, and that it was not customary to open so soon; but an hour after a report was spread that the inhabitants had shut their gates because the peasants of the country about had formed a design of pillaging the city in the absence of the governor and of his guards, and that as soon as he should arrive the gates should be opened.[d]

**5—11.** (5) **and . . heart,** *etc.*, as he sought God's help, so also he attributes to Him all he was led to do. **and . . register,** wh. is here inserted. **them . . first,** with Zerubbabel, etc., ab. 100 yrs. bef.[a] (6) **province,** Ezr. ii. 1—70. (7) **Azariah,** or Seraiah.[b]

*The decided man.*—Behold the decided man! He may be a most evil man; he may be grasping, avaricious, covetous, unprincipled: still, look how the difficulties of life know the strong man, and give up the contest with him. A universal homage is paid to the decided man as soon as he appears among men. He walks by the light of his own judgment: he has made up his mind; and, having done so, henceforth action, action, is before him. He cannot bear to sit amidst unrealised speculations: to him speculation is only valuable that it may be resolved into living and doing. There is no indifference, no delay. The spirit is in arms: all is in earnest. Thus Pompey, when hazarding his life on a tempestuous sea in order to be at Rome on an important occasion, said, "It is necessary for me to go: it is not necessary for me to live." Thus Cæsar, when he crossed the Rubicon, burned the ships upon the shore which brought his soldiers to land, that there might be no return.[c]—*The nobleness of religious decision.*—If there be a loftiness and nobleness in decision, it is most lofty, most noble in religion. You need not go for instances of this, and for the admiration which they are calculated to afford, to such examples as Foster brings before you in his inimitable essay, to the examples selected from history, to Marius, sitting amidst the ruins of Carthage, to Pizarro, to Richard III., to Cromwell; nor even to those drawn from the records of Scripture, to Daniel and to Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego; nor to those supplied by Christian martyrology, to John Huss and Jerome of Prague; nor to those borrowed from the annals of philanthropy, to Howard, to Wilberforce, and to Mrs. Fry—these

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live in the country than at Jerusalem, was because it was more suited to their genius and manner of life; but at this time their enemies were so enraged to see the walls built again, and so restless in their designs to keep the city from rising to its former splendour, that it terrified many from coming to dwell there, thinking themselves more safe in the country, where their enemies had no pretence to disturb them."—*Stackhouse.*

*d Burder.*

**the register of the genealogy**

*a* B.C. 536.

*b* Ezr. ii. 2.

"Some decent regulated pre-eminence, some preference—not exclusive appropriation—given to birth, is neither unnatural, nor unjust, nor impolitic."—*Burke.*

"He who boasts of his lineage boasts of that which does not properly belong to him."—*Seneca.*

*c E. P. Hood.*

"Deeds are greater than words. Deeds have such a life, mute, but underivable, and grow as living trees and fruit trees do; they people the vacuity of time, and make it green and worthy. Why should the oak prove logically

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that it ought to grow and will grow? Plant it, try it; what gifts of diligent, judicious assimilation and secretion it has, of progress and resistance, of force to grow, will then declare themselves." — *Carlyle.*

"A great man is affable in his converse, generous in his temper, and immovable in what he has maturely resolved upon; and as prosperity does not make him haughty and imperious, so neither does adversity sink him into meanness and dejection; for if ever he shows more spirit than ordinary, it is when he is ill-used, and the world frowns upon him; in short, he is equally removed from the extremes of servility and pride, and scorns either to trample upon a worm, or sneak to an emperor." — *Collier.*

*d J. A. James.* See below on *vv.* 24—28.

**Elam and others**

"It is, indeed, a blessing when the virtues of noble races are hereditary; and do derive themselves from the imitation of virtuous ancestors."—*Nabb.*

"Some men by ancestry are only the shadow of a mighty name."—*Lucan.*

are all grand, impressive, beautiful, but they are not the only ones that may be cited; nor, with whatever lurid or milder radiance they may be surrounded and emblazoned, are they those which are the most appropriate for you to contemplate, or which perhaps will have with you the greatest weight. Look at that manly, pious young man, who has left the shelter and protecting wing of his father's house and home, and is now placed in a modern establishment, and surrounded by fifty or a hundred fellow-shopmen, among whom he finds not one to countenance him in the maintenance of his religious profession, and the greater part of whom select him on account of his religion as the object of their pity, their scorn, their hatred, or their contempt. Among them are infidels, who ply him with flippant and specious cavils against the Bible; pleasure-takers who use every effort to engage him in their Sunday parties and their polluting amusements; men of light morality, who assail his integrity; a few lovers of science and general knowledge, who endeavour to allure him from religion to philosophy. How fearful is his situation—and how perilous! Usually it would be better to leave it, for how few can hold fast their integrity in such a situation. But there he—this decided, this inflexible, this noble-minded youth—stands firm, unyielding, decided. He is neither ashamed nor afraid of his principles—he neither denies nor conceals them. Before that laughing crowd he bends his knees and prays—in presence of that jeering set he opens his Bible and reads—from that pleasure-taking company he breaks off, amidst their scoffs, to go to the house of God. He bears the peltings of their pitiless storm of ridicule or rage, unruffled in temper, unmoved in principle, and only casts upon his persecutors a look of gentle pity, or utters a mild word of expostulation, or silently presents the prayer, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." He keeps by his firmness the whole pack at bay. Some are half subdued by his wonderful firmness. A secret admiration is bestowed upon him by others, while even they who hate him most, often are astonished most at his inflexible resolution, and it may be that one and another, at length, take hold of the skirt of his garment and say to him, "We must go with you, for we see God is with you." Talk of decision of character—there it is in all its force, beauty, and utility. I know of no case in God's world in which it is exemplified with more power than in that.[d]

**12—17. (15) Binnui,** or Bani.

*The treachery of human nature.*—There is not a beast of the field but may trust his nature, and follow it, certain that it will lead him to the best of which he is capable. But as for us, our only invincible enemy is our nature: were it sound, we could hold circumstances as lightly as Samson's withes; but it is evermore betraying us. Often, when we honestly meant to be good and noble, our miserable nature, at the first favourable juncture of circumstances, betrayed us again, and we found ourselves falling by our own hands, and bitterly felt that we were our own enemies. Heal us at the heart, and then let the world come on: we are ready for the conflict. Make us sound within, and we will stand in the evil day. We can defy circumstances, and resist the devil, if only our own breast become not a hold of

traitors; if inclinations silent, subtle, and strong as nature, do not arise to beguile us into captivity to evil."

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*a W. Arthur.*

**18—23.** (18) **Adonikam,** *etc.*, Ezra. ii. 3—19.

*The happy man.*—

He is the happy man, whose life e'en now
Shows somewhat of that happier life to come;
Who, doom'd to an obscure and tranquil state,
Is pleased with it, and, were he free to choose,
Would make his fate his choice; whom peace, the fruit
Of virtue, and whom virtue, fruit of faith,
Prepare for happiness; bespeak him one
Content indeed to sojourn while he must
Below the skies, but having there his home.
The world o'erlooks him in her busy search
Of objects more illustrious in her view;
And, occupied as earnestly as she,
Though more sublimely, he o'erlooks the world.
She scorns his pleasures, for she knows them not;
He seeks not hers, for he has proved them vain.
He cannot skim the ground like summer birds
Pursuing gilded flies; and such he deems
Her honours, her emoluments, her joys:
Therefore in contemplation is his bliss.
Whose power is such, that whom she lifts from earth
She makes familiar with a world unseen,
And shows him glories yet to be reveal'd.[a]

**Adonikam and others**

"He that boasts of his ancestors confesses that he has no virtue of his own. No person ever lived for our honour; nor ought that to be reputed ours, which was long before we had a being: for what advantage can it be to know that his parents has good eyes? Does he see one whit the better?"—*Charron.*

"Men may live fools, but fools they cannot die."—*Young.*

*a Cowper.*

**24—28.** (24) **Hariph,** *etc.*, Ezr. ii. 20—24.

*Man without religion.*—Man is no better than a leaf driven by the wind until he has completely mastered his great, lonely duties. If he has no habit of retiring from all that is worldly, and of conversing face to face with his inner man, if he does not alone invite the gaze of God; if he does not draw down upon his soul "the powers of the world to come," then he is no man yet; he has not found the life of man, nor the strength of man: he is a poor unhappy man, sporting only with shadows, and affrighted before the real and eternal. He owns a great house, a wonderful house, but it is shut up, and he lives outside with his fellow cattle. The inside is wholly unknown to him, and he has lived outside so long, that he is afraid of the inside."[a]—*Fruits of religious decision.*—More than half a century ago, a boy was put apprentice to one of our ordinary trades. There was nothing very remarkable about him, with perhaps one exception—he promised to be a pious lad. But alas! in his case as in many others, his early goodness soon passed away. He had to sleep with an ungodly apprentice; and, on retiring to rest, shame of being seen to pray so shook his firmness that, like his wicked companion, he hurried to bed without bending the knee. Again and again this was done. His regard for old lessons got less and less; by-and-by he threw them off altogether, and seemed like a boy who had never known anything better. In course of time, however, another apprentice came to his master. He also slept in the same room. Like a lad accustomed to pray, the new apprentice quietly knelt to offer prayer to God on retiring to rest. This was seen with deep emotion by the other. Conscience at once and severely condemned his want of firmness.

**Hariph and others**

"It is of no consequence of what parents any man is born, so that he be a man of merit."—*Horace.*

*a J. Pulsford.*

"Good deeds lie in the memory of age like the coral islands, green and sunny, amidst the melancholy waste of ocean."—*Dr. Thomas.*

Good deeds, like sunbeams, shine by a lustre purely their own; nor can their brightness be tarnished by all the calumnies of the slanderer's tongue.

"He that does good to another man does also good to himself, not only in the

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consequences, but in the very act of doing it; for the conscience of well-doing is an ample reward."—*Seneca.*

"True fortitude is seen in great exploits, that justice warrants and that wisdom guides."—*Addison.*

Shame to pray in the presence of his fellow-apprentice was the first step in his downward course. The poor unhappy and fallen youth was once more brought to reflection, and, with a firmer purpose than ever, he consecrated himself to the service of God. In after life he became a useful and honoured minister; and a month or two ago, after turning very many to righteousness, he passed away to glory. This minister was the beloved and reverend John Angell James of Birmingham! How much harm may we get from one act of indecision! and how much good may be done by one act of decision! Who can tell what may result from the turning of an apprentice boy to goodness? Who cannot be useful? This example of juvenile decision was the means of turning a poor apostate youth to a course whose glorious issues eternity alone can reveal.

**men of Kirjath-jearim and others**

**29—33.** (29) **Kirjath-jearim,** *etc.*, Ezr. ii. 25—29.

*The greatness of man.*—But how is man "little?" He has competent knowledge of the character of God; he is only "a little lower than the angels," and has dominion over all the works of God. He can comprehend the starry heavens; he is Godlike in his original nature; for "in the image of God made He him." The sublime truths which God has revealed to man show what estimate God has of man's capacity and responsibility. A finite creature can insult the majesty of heaven as deliberately and intelligently as the archangel; he can annihilate the authority of God in his own soul, and wherever he has influence; if all finite creatures should do this—and there are no creatures who are not finite—there would be no moral universe, no Divine government.[a]

"Pride in boasting of family antiquity makes duration stand for merit."—*Zimmermann.*

"To bear is to conquer our fate."—*Campbell.*

*a N. Adams.*

**the other Elam and others**

**34—38.** (34) **Elam,** *etc.*, Ezr. ii. 30—35.

*Man a complex being.*—

How poor, how rich, how abject, how august,
How complicate, how wonderful is man!
How passing wonder He, who made him such!
Who centred in our make such strange extremes!
From different natures marvellously mix'd,
Connection exquisite of distant worlds!
Distinguish'd link in being's endless chain!
Midway from nothing to the Deity!
A beam ethereal, sullied and absorpt!
Though sullied and dishonour'd, still Divine!
Dim miniature of greatness absolute!
An heir of glory! a frail child of dust!
Helpless immortal! insect infinite!
A worm!—a God![a]

"Philosophy does not regard pedigree: she did not deceive Plato as a noble, but she made him so."—*Seneca.*

"An inconstant man is despicable; a faithless man is base."—*Blair.*

*a Young.*

**the priests**

**39—42.** (39) **priests,** *etc.*,[a] Ezr. ii. 36—39.

*Man not dependent on good fortune.*—

He's not the happy man to whom is given
A plenteous fortune by indulgent heaven;
Whose gilded roofs on shining columns rise,
And painted walls enchant the gazer's eyes;
Whose table flows with hospitable cheer,
And all the various bounty of the year;
Whose valleys smile, whose gardens breathe the spring,
Whose carved mountains bleat and forests sing:

*a* 1 Ch. xxiv. 7—9, 14.

"Of all vanities of fopperies, the vanity of high birth is the greatest. True nobility is derived from virtue, not from birth. Titles in- may be

For whom the cooling shade in summer twines,
While his full cellars give their generous wines;
From whose wide fields unbounded autumn pours
A golden tide into his swelling stores;
Whose winter laughs; for whom the liberal gales
Stretch the big sheet, and toiling commerce sails;
When yielding crowds attend, and pleasure serves;
While youth, and health, and vigour string his nerves.[b]

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purchased, but virtue is the only coin that makes the bargain valid."—*Burton.*

[b] *J. Thomson.*

**43—45.** (43) **Levites,** Ezr. ii. 40. (44) **singers,** Ezr. ii. 41. (45) **porters,** Ezr. ii. 42.

**the Levites**

*Missionaries and music.*—The Rev. Jonathan Lees, of the London Mission, Tientsin, North China, has sent Mr. Sankey two little Chinese books, one containing the words of twenty of the well-known *Songs and Solos*, which he has translated into Chinese, and the other giving the music of ten of them printed in the Chinese version of the Tonic Sol-fa notation. Mr. Lees says the songs have already proved their fitness to deepen and cheer the Christian life in a most pleasing way. He says the musical faculty is one which seems well-nigh extinct in China, but the northern people are far ahead of the southern in this capacity, and the Tientsin church bids fair to be a musical one. Mr. Lees adds that this is not the first attempt to introduce the Tonic Sol-fa, but it is in a new form, and one which is thoroughly Chinese. The Rev. J. S. Barradale, another of the missionaries, writing to a friend in England, explains why the ordinary staff notation can never be used by the Chinese. Their letters are ranged in perpendicular columns, and they read from the right-hand side of the page to the left. The Tonic Sol-fa letters can be placed in this way with ease, but not so with the staff, which is necessarily horizontal. Mr. Barradale says that "the Sol-fa notation can be made to retain all its easiness in its Chinese dress, while thoroughly conforming to Chinese usage."—*Singing in the time of trouble.*—It is said that on the memorable night when the church of St. Thomas was invested by the troops of Syrianus, the Archbishop Athanasius, while the public devotions were interrupted by shouts of rage and cries of terror, animated his trembling congregation to express their confidence by singing one of the Psalms of David.

"In the germ, when the first trace of life begins to stir, music is the nurse of the soul; it murmurs in the ear, and the child sleeps; the tones are companions of his dreams,—they are the world in which he lives."—*Bettina.*

"Hearing oftentimes the still sad music of humanity, nor harsh, nor grating, though of ample power to chasten and subdue."—*Wordsworth.*

"Tones are the cadences which emotion gives to thought."—*Herbert Spencer.*

**46—51.** (46) **Nethinims,** *etc.*, Ezr. ii. 43—45.

**the Nethinims**

*The genealogy of the poor.*—I. The records of the poor have seldom a place in human history. II. The working man is not overlooked in the Word of God. III. The lowest work, even that of the porter, is worthy of note. IV. Much of the world's noblest undertakings is dependent on the hodman. V. Even such men may be servants of God and serve Him in their work. VI. We find them here in the same register as that which contains the names of priests and nobles.

*The material of man.*—Man hath received from God not only an excellent fabric and composure of body, but, if you consider it, the very matter of which the body is composed is far more excellent than dust or earth. Take a piece of earth, or handful of dust, and compare them with the flesh of man; that flesh is earth indeed, but that flesh is far better than mere earth. This shows the power of the Creator infinitely exceeding the power of a creature. A goldsmith can make you a goodly jewel, but you

"Being well satisfied that, for a man who thinks himself to be somebody, there is nothing more disgraceful than to hold himself up as honoured, not on his own account, but for the sake of his forefathers. Yet hereditary honours are a noble and splendid treasure to descendants."—*Plato.*

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"The influence of a pious example descends downwards from the head of a family, diffuses itself over the main body, till it reaches the very lowest of it."—*Seed a Caryl.*

must give him gold and precious stones of which to make it: he can put the matter into a better form, but he cannot make the matter better. The engraver can make a curious statue, exactly limbed and proportioned to the life, out of a rough piece, but the matter must be the same you put into his hands: if you give him marble, it will be a marble statue; he cannot mend the matter. Man's work often exceeds his matter, but man's work cannot make the matter exceed itself. If the body, then, be but clay and hath a foundation of dust, do not bestow too much cost upon the clay and the dust. In an over-cared body there ever dwells a neglected soul. We usually laugh at children when they are making houses of clay. They whose care is over active for the body are but children of a greater stature, and show they have so much more folly in their hearts than they. There is no child like to the old child.[a]

"Title and ancestry render a good man more illustrious, but an ill one more contemptible. Vice is infamous though in a prince, and virtue honourable though in a peasant."—*Addison. a Colton.*

**52—56.** (52) **Besai,** *etc.*, Ezr. ii. 46—54.

*Man a reasoning creature.*—Man is that compound being, created to fill that wide hiatus that must otherwise have remained unoccupied between the natural world and the spiritual; and he sympathises with the one in his death, and will be associated with the other in his resurrection. Without another state, it would be utterly impossible for him to explain the difficulties of this. Possessing earth, but destined for heaven, he forms the link between the two orders of beings, and partakes much of the grossness of the one, and somewhat of the refinement of the other. Reason, like the magnetic influence imparted to iron, gives to matter properties and powers which it possessed not before, but without extending its bulk, augmenting its weight, or altering its organisation: it is visible only by its effects, and perceptible only by its operations. Reason, superadded to man, gives him peculiar and characteristic views, responsibilities, and destinations, exalting him above all existences that are visible but which perish, and associating him with those that are invisible but which remain. Reason is that Homeric and golden chain descending from the throne of God even unto man, uniting heaven with earth, and earth with heaven. For all is connected, and without a chasm: from an angel to an atom, all is proportion, harmony, and strength.[a]

"As they who deck themselves have the looking-glass before their eyes; so they who go about any worthy thing must have the example of worthy men in mind, and do it in that manner that others may not scorn to make them their example."—*Cawdray.*

**57—62.** (57) **children . . servants,** *etc.*, Ezr. ii. 55—60. (62) **seed,** pedigree.

**the children of Solomon's servants**

*The restoration of man.*—A researcher of art in Italy, reading in some book that there was a portrait of Dante painted by Giotto, was led to suspect where it had been placed. There was an apartment used as an outhouse for the storing of wood, hay, and the like. He besought and obtained permission to examine it. Clearing out the rubbish, and experimenting upon the white-washed wall, he soon detected the signs of the long-hidden portrait. Little by little with loving skill he opened up the sad, thoughtful, stern face of the old Tuscan poet. Sin has done for man what the whitewash did for the painting. It has covered over the likeness of God upon the soul; and it is only by the Spirit of God Himself that the long-hidden likeness can be manifested again.

"Pride of origin, whether high or low, springs from the same principle in human nature; one is but the positive, the other the negative, people fasing'e weakness."—*Lowell.*

**63—65.** (63) **priests,** *etc.*, Ezr. ii. 61—63. (65) **Tirshatha,**[a] governor. **till . . Thummim,** Ezr. ii. 63.

the register of some of the priests lost

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*Preparations for service.*—"Methought I looked and saw the Master standing, and at His feet lay an earthen vessel. It was not broken, not unfitted for service, yet there it lay, powerless and useless, until He took it up. He held it awhile, and I saw that He was filling it, and anon, I beheld Him walking in His garden, whither He had 'gone down to gather lilies.' The earthen vessel was yet again in His hand, and with it He watered His beauteous plants, and caused their odours to be shed forth yet more abundantly. Then I said to myself, 'Sorrowing Christian, hush! hush! peace, be still! thou art this earthen vessel; powerless, it is true, yet not broken, still fit for the Master's use. Sometimes thou mayst be laid aside altogether from active service, and the question may arise, 'What is the Master doing with me now?' Then may a voice speak to thine inmost heart, 'He is filling the vessel, yes, only filling it ready for use.' Dost thou ask in what manner? Nay, be silent. Is it not all too great an honour for thee to be used by Him at all? Be content, whether thou art employed in watering the lilies, or in washing the feet of the saints.' Truly, it is a matter of small moment. Enough, surely enough, for an earthen vessel to be in the Master's hands, and employed in the Master's service."

**66—69.** (66) **the . . together,** *etc.*, Ezr. ii. 64.

*A difficulty well met.*—There was once a difficulty amongst the singers of Dr. Samuel West's church, New Bedford, United States, and it was reported that the choir would not sing a note on the next Sunday. The doctor commenced that morning's worship by giving out Watts's hymn, "Come ye who love the Lord." After reading it through, he looked up very emphatically at the choir, and said, "You will begin at the second verse:—

'Let those refuse to sing
Who never knew our God.'"

They sang that hymn.

**70—73.** (70) **some,** part. **Tirshatha, viii. 9. drams,**[a] darics. The daric, an anc. Persian gold coin = 25s. (71) **pound of silver,** a *mina* = 60 shekels = £9. (72) **garments,** a customary gift in the E. (73) **so,** *etc.*, hence the use of this register in guiding the people to their cities. **month,** Tisri.[b]

*Proportionate giving.*—I. The chiefs of the people gave with a princely munificence. II. The rest of the people gave as much collectively, by each one giving as much as he could. III. The gifts of the poor not to be despised; the widow's mite was registered in heaven.

*Giving with simplicity.*—What is giving with simplicity? Why, it is giving just as if giving were so natural that when a man gave he did not think of changing his countenance, his manners, or his air, at all; but did it quietly, easily, beautifully. When you are going around for proper help, some men give so that you are angry every time you ask them to contribute. They give so that their gold and silver shoot you like a bullet. Other persons give with such beauty that you remember it as long as you live; and you say, "It is a pleasure to go to such men." There are some men that give as springs do. Whether you go to them or not they are always full, and your part is merely to put your dish under the ever-flowing stream. Others

a viii. 9.

"If it is fortunate to be of noble ancestry, it is not less so to be such as that people do not care to be informed whether you are noble or ignoble." — *Bruyère.*

"Man feels a thousand deaths in fearing one" —*Young.*

**the number of the whole congregation**

"Let the world have their maygames, wakes, whetsunales, their dancings and concerts; their puppet-shows, hobby-horses, tabors, bagpipes, balls, barley-breaks, and whatever sports and recreations please them best, provided they be followed with discretion."—*Burton.*

**the contributions to the work**

a Ezr. ii. 69.

b Ezr. iii. 1.

Their donations consisted principally in garments. This would appear a singular description of gifts to be made by any one amongst us; but in the East a present of garments, or of any article of use, is conformable to the prevailing sentiments and customs of society.

give just as a pump does where the well is dry and the pump leaks![c]

## CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.

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**the people gather to hear the law**

**1—4.** (1) **all . . man,** to celebrate the feast of trumpets.[a] **into . . gate,** in S. rampart.[b] **they . . scribe,** who had come to Jerus. ab. 12 yrs. bef. Neh.[c] (2) **all . . understanding,**[d] all old enough, or who knew the language. (3) **ears . . law,** a long service, but an attentive congregation. (4) **pulpit,** *lit.* tower. **and . . stood,** hence this pulpit must have been a high platform, to afford standing-room for 13 persons.

*Ezra expounding the law.*—There are several particulars contained in this narrative of a novel and interesting character. I. It was a large gathering. Large congregations—1. Give an opportunity for more extensive usefulness; 2. They possess a peculiar power of stimulating those who have to address them. II. It was an open-air gathering. III. It was a protracted gathering. IV. It was an attentive gathering. V. It was a devout, earnest, and reverential gathering. VI. It was an intelligent and well-instructed gathering.—*The oldest pulpit.*—This is the first account we have of a pulpit. In structure it was evidently not a very elegant one. It was extemporised for the occasion; it was more of a platform than modern pulpit. The words of the text lead us to make three remarks on this old pulpit. I. It was occupied by duly qualified men. They were the recognised teachers of Israel. A greater curse to Christianity is scarcely to be found than unqualified preachers. II. This old pulpit was attended by an exemplary congregation. 1. It was a congregation disposed to hear; 2. It was a congregation competent to understand; 3. It was a congregation deeply interested in the discourse; 4. It was a congregation inspired with religious reverence. III. This old pulpit accomplished the grand end of preaching. 1. It imparted spiritual instruction; 2. It made a deep religious impression; 3. It stimulated a practical godliness.[e]

*Long religious services.*—Complaints against long religious services are very frequent. Few things appear so bad to some persons as to be kept in the house of God more than one or two hours. Let us see how it was in the seventeenth century. Mr. Howe was then minister of Great Torrington, in Devonshire. His labours here were characteristic of the times. On the public fasts, it was his common method to begin about nine in the morning, with a prayer for about a quarter of an hour, in which he begged a blessing on the work of the day; he afterwards read and expounded a chapter or psalm, in which he spent about three-quarters of an hour; then prayed an hour; preached another hour; and prayed again for half an hour. After this he retired, and took a little refreshment for a quarter of an hour or more, the people singing all the while. He then returned to the pulpit, prayed for another hour, gave them another sermon of about an hour's length; and so concluded the service of the day, about four o'clock in the afternoon, with half an hour or more of prayer.—*The Lord was there.*—That religiously trained children understand a great deal about good things when very young. I record the following instance which came under my own observa-

*a* First day of 7th ecc es. year; and new year's day of the civil year, Le. xxiii. 24; 1 K. viii. 2.

*b* Through this gate the Nethinims brought water into the temp., and there was a large area bef. it.

*c* B.C. 458, with commission fr. Artaxerxes, Ezr. vii. 8—28, viii. 1.

*d* De. xxxi. 12.

*vv.* 4—8. *Bp. Mant*, 333.

*e Dr. Thomas.* "Five or six hours together they spent in holy duties, whereas the most among us think long of an hour; they sit, as it were, in the stocks while they hear the Word read or preached, and come out of the church, when the tedious sermon runneth somewhat beyond the glass, like prisoners out of a gaol."—*Trapp.*

"The devout man exults in the indications of his being fixed and irretrievable. He feels this confirmed habit as the grasp of the hand of God, which will never let him go. From this advanced state he looks with firm-

tion. Being out preaching one Sunday, at the place where I took tea was a little boy about five or six years old. A Bible was lying on the table, to which he seemed somewhat attached, and about which we had some talk. "Now," says the little boy, "if I do what father has told me, he has promised to give me a Bible like this." What he had to do was to attend a seven o'clock Sunday morning prayer meeting the whole of the next year. I said, "Were you at the prayer meeting this morning?" "Yes," was the reply. I now asked the little fellow if he could tell me how many there were at the seven o'clock prayer meeting. "O yes," says he, "I'll call them over, and you count." I did so, till I had counted seven. "Then there were seven at the prayer meeting this morning?" "O no," said he, after a moment's pause, "there were eight there." I asked him to call over their names again; he did so, but only gave seven names. I then said, "Come, my little fellow, you must have made a mistake; however, try once more." He then called their names over again, and this time also we couldn't get past the number seven. I then said, "You must most certainly have made a mistake, my little man." He then looked at me so wistfully, I seemed to read a meaning in the glance of his eye; and after keeping me a few moments in a somewhat little curious suspense, he burst out in a joyous strain, "There *were* eight there, for the Lord was there."

**5—8.** (5) **opened,** unrolled. **all . . up,** reverence for the law of God.[a] (6) **Amen,**[b] so be it; or, so let it be. Thus they expressed thanks for it, and affirmed their allegiance to it. **with . . hands,**[c] as pledging themselves to obey the law. (7) **Bani,** *etc.*, xii. 8. **caused . . law,** perh. by means of transla. of Heb. into Chaldee.[d] (8) **so . . distinctly,** *lit.* they read it, so that it was clearly *laid out, spread out.* A hint to both readers and expositors of the Bible. **and . . reading,** the people understood, etc.[e]

*Effect of Ezra's preaching.*—We may profitably look back to the time of Ezra to learn from him and his ministry—I. In what manner the Word of God should be dispensed. The mode adopted by Ezra, namely the expository, we conceive to be peculiary worthy of imitation. 1. It leads the people into a better acquaintance with the Scriptures; 2. It brings every part of the sacred records into view; 3. It brings home truth to the conscience with more authority. But, in considering the Word of God as explained at Jerusalem, we are more particularly led to notice—II. In what manner it should be heard. Truly admirable was the conduct of the people on this occasion. Observe—1. Their reverential awe; 2. Their devout affection; 3. Their unreserved obedience.[f]

*The practice of sleeping in places of worship.*—A practice, we believe, not prevalent in any other place of public resort—is not only a gross violation of the advice we are given, to hear the Word with attention, but most distressing to ministers, and most disgraceful to those who indulge it. If the Apostle indignantly inquires of the Corinthians whether they had not homes to eat and drink in, may we not with equal propriety ask those who indulge in this practice whether they have not beds to sleep in, that they convert the house of God into a domitory? A little self-denial, a very gentle restraint on the appetite, would, in most cases, put a stop to this abomination; and with what

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ness and joy on futurity, and says, 'I carry the eternal mark upon me, that I belong to God: I am free of the universe; and I am ready to go to any world to which He shall please to transmit me—certain that everywhere, in height or depth, He will acknowledge me for ever."—*Foster.*

"Though Fortune's malice overthrow my state, my mind exceeds the compass of her wheel." —*Shakespeare.*

**Ezra reads the law to the people**

*a* Jud. iii. 20; Job xxix. 8, xxvii. 14.

*b* 1 Co. xiv. 16.

*c* Lam. iii. 14; 1 Ti. ii. 8.

*d* *Pearson, Creed,* ii. 81; so, the Rabbis, see *Lightfoot, Hor. Heb.* 250; *Pfeiffer, Dubia,* 254.

*e* *Hooker* shows that the reading of the Bible to the people is the best preaching, V., xxi., xxii.

*v.* 6. *F. Woodcock, Morn. Ex.* iv. 155.

*vv.* 7, 8. *Dr. R. Burrowes,* 223.

*v.* 8. *J. Weemse, Expos.* ii. 124.

*f* *C. Simeon, M.A.*

Constantine the Great and our King Edward the VI. would not hear a sermon but standing.

*g* *R. Balk.*

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propriety can he pretend to desire the sincere milk of the Word who cannot be prevailed upon, one day out of seven, to refrain from the gluttony which absolutely disqualifies him from receiving it.[g]

**the people weeping are reproved**

*a* As in *v.* 14.

*b* Est. ix. 19, 22; Re. xi. 10; De. xvi. 14.

*c Bp. Andrewes*, iv. 217; *Dr. Barrow*, iii. 427—450.

"Holy joy is like oil to the wheels of our obedience."—*M. Henry.*

*d* 1 Ch. xvi. 27, Ezr. vi. 16.

"Joy in God is a religious duty. The devout soul derives strength fr. godly thankfulness and holy joy, bec. it knows that God wil help those who praise Him and rejoice in Him. If the strength of the Lord is our joy, then the joy of the Lord will be our strength."—*Bp. Wordsworth.*

*v.* 9. *J. S. M. Anderson*, 182.

*v.* 10. *Dr. H. Blair*, v 338; *W. Jay*, vi. 249; *J. Spence*, 237; *Bp. Dehon*, i. 328; *A. Roberts*, iii. 279; *F. Trench*, 25.

*d W. W. Wythe.*

*e Bowes.*

"Nehemiah had Jovianus the emperor's happiness, which was, that he might govern wise men, and that wise men might govern him."—*Trapp.*

*f Harmer.*

**the feast of tabernacles**

*a* See *v.* 1.

*b* Le. xxiii. 34, 42; De. xvi. 13.

**9—12.** (9) **Tirshatha,** the Persian title; the Heb. would be Pechah.[a] **wept,** they wept tears of sorrow at their sins, and of joy at God's goodness. **wept,** 2 Ki. xxii. 11. (10) **sweet,** new wine. **and . . prepared,**[b] they were to be mindful of the absent and the poor. **day . . Lord,** *see* on *v.* 1. **joy,**[c] Heb. *chedevah*, found only in two other places.[d] (11) **Levites,** following the example, and obeying the command of their leaders. (12) **people,** *etc.*, thus comforted, ceased weeping.

*Rejoice in the Lord.*—I. The Christian is a joyful man. 1. God enjoins it; 2. His Word promises it; 3. His Spirit inspires it; 4. His work produces it; 5. His nature shares it. II. His joy is a source of strength—1. In his religious profession; 2. In the exercise of his influence; 3. In the discharge of his duties; 4. In his temptations and trials; 5. In the hour of death.[e]—*The definition and utility of holy joy.*—"The joy of the Lord." I. From Him (Gal. v. 22) true joy is one of the sweet comforts of the Comforter (Psa. xciv. 19). II. In Him (Rom. v. 11; Phil. iii. 1). III. Living for Him, for what joy so pure as the life for God? (Psa. xxi. 1; Thess. ii. 19, 20, iii. 9).[f]

*Sending portions*—The Eastern princes and the Eastern people not only invite their friends to feasts, but it is their custom to send a portion of the banquet to those that cannot well come to it, especially their relations, and those in a state of mourning. This sending of portions to those for whom nothing was prepared has been understood by those commentators I have consulted to mean the poor; sending portions, however, to one another is expressly distinguished in Esth. ix. 22 *from gifts to the poor.* There would not have been the shadow of a difficulty in this had the historian been speaking of a private feast, but he is describing a national festival, where every one was supposed to be equally concerned: those, then, *for whom nothing was prepared*, it should seem, means those that were in a state of mourning; mourning for private calamities being here supposed to take the place of rejoicing for public concerns. But it is not only to those that are in a state of mourning that provisions are sometimes sent; others are honoured by princes in the same manner, who could not conveniently attend to the royal table, or to whom it was supposed not to be convenient. So when the grand emir found it incommoded Monsieur D'Arvieux to eat with him, he complaisantly desired him to take his own time for eating, and sent him what he liked from his kitchen, and at the time he chose. And thus, when King David would needs suppose, for secret reasons too well known to himself, that it would be inconvenient for Uriah to continue at the royal palace, and therefore dismissed him to his own house, "there followed him a mess of meat from the king." 2 Sa. xi. 8, 10.[f]

**13—15.** (13) **on . . day,** of the feast.[a] **were . . fathers,** the desire of the people to hear the law made it the more needful that these should be able to teach. **into . . scribe,** a recognised master in Israel. (14) **and . . law,**[b] *i.e.* they came to the place in the course of their reading. **dwell . . month,**

feast of tabernacles. (15) **go . . mount,** of Olives. **olive . . pine,**[c] olive and wild olive.

*A forgotten ordinance.*—"They found it written," etc.—I. The human memory is treacherous in matters of duty. II. We have need to continually search the Bible for the overlooked things of duty. III. Things found written in the book should be reduced to practice. IV. We should read the Bible to learn as well as to be comforted.

*The myrtle.*—The sacred writers, when speaking of this plant, are generally supposed to refer to the *Myrtus communis*, a common myrtle which is found in many parts of the East. "Its dark glossy leaves and sweet white flowers are seen on the hills near Jerusalem; and in Italy the myrtle thickets are most lovely and fragrant. The bark and the root are employed in tanning the finer Russian leather, and the berries and flower-buds are eaten instead of pepper abroad." Whatever may be the sense intended by that beautiful vision of the prophet, Zech. i. 8—11, nothing could be better suited for an emblem of beauty and peace than a valley shaded with myrtles. The myrtaceous trees generally flourish most in those places where the air is still and tranquil, and defended by some mountain range. Hence, they are represented in the vision as growing in a valley, symbolising the stillness and rest of earth.

**16—18.** (16) **roof . . house,**[a] the roof was flat. **courts,** *etc.*,[b] *i.e.* they utilised all open spaces for this purpose. (17) **since . . so,** *i.e.* the feast had not been kept with such fulness of joy and close attention to the law of it. **and . . gladness,**[c] the joy was general as well as deep. (18) **also . . God,** they were not weary of hearing the Word. **eighth day,** the great day of the feast.[d]

*Great gladness in Israel.*—I. What led to it? The discovery of duty through reading the Word of God. II. Of what nature was it? It was the joy of obedience and thankfulness. III. Who were these glad people? They were keeping a religious festival, having just performed a great work.

*Delight in the Word of God.*—"A very poor woman in Edinburgh, who was so nearly blind as not to be able to peruse the Bible, could get no one to read it to her. She was greatly distressed to live day after day without the comfort and direction of this blessed book. She thought of many plans, and made many inquiries, but all in vain. At last she made a bargain with another woman to read her a chapter every night; and for this service she paid her a penny a week out of her scanty pittance."[e] —Lady Jane Grey was once asked by one of her friends how she could forego the pleasures of the chase and prefer sitting at home reading her Bible. She replied, "All amusements of that description are but the shadow of the pleasure which I enjoy in reading this book."—*How to read the Bible.*—To some the Bible is uninteresting and unprofitable, because they read too fast. Amongst the insects which subsist on the sweet sap of flowers, there are two very different classes. One is remarkable for its imposing plumage, which shows in the sunbeams like the dust of gems; and as you watch its jaunty gyrations over the fields, and its minuet dance from flower to flower, you cannot help admiring its graceful activity, for it is plainly getting over a great deal of ground. But, in the same field there is another worker, whose

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c "The former is the Heb. *zaith*, the latter is *Semen* (Gen. 835), whence Gethsemane." — *Bp. Wordsworth.*

"Divine knowledge is as a great lady, but will not be easily acquainted with us but upon further suit." — *Trapp.*

Æneas Sylvius was wont to say of knowledge, popular men should esteem it as silver, noblemen as gold, princes prize it as pearls.

**the feast is kept with great joy**

*a* De. xxii. 8.
*b* Ex. xxiii. 14, 17; De. xvi. 16; Nu. x. 10; Ps. lxxxi. 3.
*c* 2 Ch. xxx. 21.
*d* Le. xxiii. 36; Jo. vii. 37.
"They had listened on the first day of the month from morning unto midday; but the more they heard the Word of God, the more desirous were they to hear it. The more men converse with the Scriptures, the more they will wish and love to do so."—*Wordsworth.*

*e Whitecross.*

"In the Old Testament there are 931 chapters; but by distributing the 150 Psalms into 60 equal parts, they will then be reduced to 841: add to these 260, which is the number

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contained in the New Testament they will then be 1101. Divide this by 3, and you will find each part contain 365 chapters, and 6 over; so that by reading 3 chapters every day, you will read the whole over in one year, except 6 chapters. The most profitable method is to begin with the first chapter of Genesis, the first Psalm, and the first chapter of Matthew, and to proceed regularly."—*Dr. Duncan.*

*f Dr. J. Hamilton.*

brown vest and business-like straightforward flight may not have arrested your eye. His fluttering neighbour darts down here and there, and sips elegantly wherever he can find a drop of ready nectar; but this dingy plodder makes a point of alighting everywhere, and wherever he alights he either finds honey or makes it. If the flower-cup be deep, he goes down to the bottom; if its dragon-mouth be shut, he thrusts its lips asunder; and if the nectar be peculiar or recondite, he explores all about till he discovers it, and then having ascertained the knack of it, joyful as one who has found great spoil, he sings his way down into its luscious recesses. His rival, of the painted velvet wing, has no patience for such dull and long-winded details. But what is the end? Why, the one died last October along with the flowers; the other is warm in his hive to-night, amidst the fragrant stores which he gathered beneath the bright beams of summer. Reader, to which do you belong?—the butterflies or bees? Do you search the Scriptures, or do you only skim them? Do you dwell on a passage till you bring out some meaning, or till you can carry away some memorable truth or immediate lesson? or do you flit along on heedless wing, only on the look-out for novelty, and too frivolous to explore or ponder the Scriptures? Does the Word of God dwell in you so richly, that in the vigils of a restless night, or in the bookless solitude of a sick room, or in the winter of old age, or exclusion from ordinances, its treasured truth would perpetuate summer round you, and give you meat to eat which the world knows not of?[f]

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**solemn repentance of the people**

*a* 1 S. iv. 12, 2 S. i. 2; Job ii. 12.

*b* Ezr. ix. 2, x. 2.

"They did not allow the joys of the feast of tabernacles to efface the penitential sorrow which they had felt before it. Holy joy had not indisposed them for godly sorrow, but rather quickened it."—*Wordsworth.*

"Our spiritual pleasures are so heavenly, and have so much of God and glory in them, that they must needs prepare the soul for heaven, and be excellent helps to our salvation."—*Baxter*

## *CHAPTER THE NINTH.*

**1—3.** (1) **now,** *etc.*,[a] sorrowful, yet always rejoicing. (2) **strangers,** *Heb.* strange children. The offspring of strange marriages. (3) **they . . place,** prob. this refs. to Ezra and the readers.

*The confession of sin.*—I. It was general. Not one class of people alone. Each had sinned. II. It was public. They had sinned publicly. They would publicly confess that they had sinned. III. It was far-reaching. Into the past. They confessed the sins of the nation in all ages. IV. It was accompanied with a purpose of amendment.

*The Bible a treasure.*—A good man once entered a house in Germany, and found it very wretched, no fire, no furniture, no food. Everything bore the appearance of utter poverty. But, glancing round, he saw, in a neglected corner, a copy of the Bible; and when he went away he said to the poor inmates, "There is a treasure in this house that would make you all rich." After he had gone, the people began to search the house for what they thought must be a jewel or a pot of gold, and finding nothing they went to dig up the very floor, in hopes of discovering the hidden store of wealth. All in vain. One day after that the mother lifted up the old Bible, and found written on the fly-leaf of it, taken from its own pages, these words, "Thy testimonies are better to me than ten thousands of gold and silver." "Ah!" she said, "can this be the treasure the stranger spoke of?" *Bo*

she told her thought to the rest; they began to read the Bible, became changed in character, and a blessing came in to stay with them. The stranger came back to find poverty gone, contentment and peace in its place, and a hearty Christian welcome, while, with grateful joy, the family told him, "We found the treasure, and it has proved all that you said to us it would."—*The blessed Bible.*—In Scotland, during the times of bloody persecution, when Claverhouse was marching about the country, driving people from their homes, burning their houses, and putting many godly people to death, a pious father told his family that there were soldiers near, and they must hasten to the next village, where there was a strong old church the fugitives could use as a fort. So he told Jeanie to take the big Bible for her load, and that she must be very careful not to let it get wet or lose it by the way; 'for we could not live,' said he, 'without the good book.' So she wrapped a gown around the Bible, and started with her father and mother, each of whom carried a child. They had to cross a brook; but they did not dare to go by the bridge, lest they should be captured by the enemy. There was a place where they thought they could cross on some stepping-stones; but on reaching the place, it had become quite dark. So Jeanie's father waded across, and carried the others one by one, until she was left quite alone. Jeanie was much afraid to be left there by herself, so she started to cross after her father, stepping carefully from stone to stone. But presently her foot slipped, and down she went to the bottom. At the same time up went her arms, holding the precious burden over her head. The water came up to her waist, but bracing herself firmly against the rapid current, she walked bravely on across the stream, and had nearly reached the shore, with the dear old book lifted as high as she could raise it, when she met her father returning to bring her. 'Father,' she cried, 'you told me to take care of the dear old Bible, and I have done so.' Just as she said this they heard several pistol-shots and the sound of approaching horsemen. They soon hid themselves in a little cleft of the rocks, and were not discovered. Jeanie married in after years, and now has great-great-grandchildren living in this country. The old Bible became hers after her father's death, and in it were written the names of her seven children. It is still, in very good condition, in the possession of her descendants. Jeanie never forgot that dreadful night when she carried the old Bible through the deep waters; and when she was dying, she seemed to be dreaming of it, and said—'I am in the deep river—in the deep river; but I'll hold up the dear old Bible! There, take the book! take the book!' and soon she ceased to breathe. That brave girl wading through the waters, and holding up the Bible, is like the Christian Church, marching through rivers of persecution and streams of blood, ever holding up the Word of God, that it might be safely kept and handed down to the generations following.[c]

4—6. (4) **stairs,** the scaffold or platform. (5) **Levites,** for these names consult refs.[a] **stand up,** *etc.*, opening exhortation to the people to unite with one accord in gen. confess. of faith. (6) **thou . . alone,** *etc.*, confess. of unity, omnipresence, etc., of God; in opposition to heathen errors.

*The glorious God of Israel.*—God is here worshipped—I. As exalted above all blessing and praise. II. As the Creator of all

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"Whatever else may be said about the Bible, I am sure no man can deny that it is the best book to guide men toward practical virtue and true holiness that ever has appeared in the world. Whatever may be the disputes about its origin, whatever may be the controversies and the doubts upon the various theories of inspiration, as a practical book, as a light to a man's feet and a lamp to his path, it has proved itself to be, and can by investigation be shown to be, the wisest book to follow that is known."—*H. W. Beecher.*

"I might pause over every verse of the Scriptures, and say, "Such a verse was blessed to so many souls; then why not to me? I am at least in the pool of Bethesda; I am walking amongst its porches; and who can tell but that the angel will stir the pool of the Word whilst I lie helplessly by the side of it, waiting for the blessing?'"—*Spurgeon.*

*c S. S. Visitor.*

**the Levites stand up and bless the Lord**

*a* Neh. iii. 17, vii. 43, x. 10, 14, xiv. 8, 24; Ezr. ii. 40, iii. 9.

*b* De x. 14; 1 Ki viii. 27. See also

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*Bp. Pearson, Creed*, i. 64—66. It may be true, as Jay says, that a sportsman has fired into a flight of birds, and not killed one; and he has killed one when he had only one to aim at, but, on the other hand, if two anglers went out with rod and line to fish, he would surely catch the largest number in a pond where fish were abundant than he who angled where fish were scarce.

**they recount His good in the past**

*a* Ac. vii. 1—4.

*b* He. xi. 8.

*c* Ge. xv. 18—21, xvii. 7, 8; Jos. xxiii. 14.

*d* Ex. iii. 7, xiv. 10.

*e* Ex. xviii. 11; Ps. cv. 26, 27, lxxviii. 12, 43.

*f Dr. Thomas.*

"And made a covenant to be his God and the God of his seed. This was *divini mellis alveare*, the beehive of the heavenly honey; this was more than to be monarch of the whole world." —*Trapp.*

*g Spence.*

**His wonders at Sinai**

*a* Ps. lxxviii. 13; Ex. xiv. 21, 28; He. xi. 29; Ex. xv. 5, 10.

*b* Ex xl. 38; Ps. lxxviii. 14, cv. 39.

*c* Ps. xix. 8, 9; Ro. vii. 12.

*d* Ex. xvi. 25, 26, xx. 8, 11.

*e Trapp.*

things. III. As the great Preserver of all. IV. As the object of angelic worship.

*The gospel of dirt.*—The *Ardrossan and Saltcoats Herald* publishes the following extract of a letter written to a friend by Mr. Carlyle:—"A good sort of man is this Darwin, and well-meaning, but with very little intellect. Ah, it's a sad, a terrible thing to see nigh a whole generation of men and women, professing to be cultivated, looking around in a purblind fashion, and finding no God in this universe. I suppose it is a reaction from the reign of cant and hollow pretence, professing to believe what, in fact, they do not believe. And this is what we have got to. All things from frog spawn; the gospel of dirt the order of the day. The older I grow—and I now stand upon the brink of eternity—the more comes back to me the sentence in the Catechism which I learned when a child, and the fuller and deeper its meaning becomes, 'What is the chief end of man? To glorify God, and enjoy Him for ever.' No gospel of dirt, teaching that men have descended from frogs through monkeys, can ever set that aside."

**7—10.** (7) **who . . Abram,** Ac. xiii. 17. **and . . Chaldees,**[a] Ge. xii. 1. **Abraham,** Ge. xvii. 5. (8) **and . . thee,**[b] Ge. xv. 6. **and . . land,**[c] Ge. xii. 7. (9) **see,** *etc.*,[d] Ex. ii. 25. (10) **signs,** *etc.*,[e] Ex. vii.—xii.

*The path of duty the path of trial.*—Observe—I. That the path of duty here runs through great trials. Sometimes—1. It involves the sacrifice of the most endeared friendship; 2. The sacrifice of worldly prospects; 3. The endangering of life itself; 4. An outrage on our tender sentiments. II. That great trials serve to test the principles of pilgrims. 1. It reveals the bad principles of the heart; 2. It reveals the good principles of the heart. III. That unbounded faith in God is essential to carry us safely through the path of duty with all its great trials.[f]

*God in duty.*—It was the speech of Mr. Bradford, that he could not leave a duty till he had found communion with Christ in the duty, till he had brought his heart into a duty-frame; he could not leave confession till he had found his heart touched, broken, and humbled for sin; nor petition till he had found his heart taken with the beauties of the things desired, and carried out after them; nor could he leave thanksgiving till he had found his spirit enlarged and his soul quickened in the return of praises, —just like that of St. Bernard, who found God in every duty, and communion with Him in every prayer: this was true, sincere, complete Christian duty.[g]

**11—14.** (11) **divide,** *etc.*,[a] Ps. lxxiv. 13. (12) **leddest,**[b] *etc.*, Ex. xiii. 21. (13) **Sinai,**[c] Ex. xix. 20. (14) **Sabbath,** *etc.*,[d] Ge. ii. 3.

*Good statutes and commandments.*—Good they are in respect —I. Of the author. II. Of the matter. III. Of the effect: for they make those good that observe them. This is true of the moral law; as for the judicial, it was fitted for the Jews, and best for them: but Carolostadius did ill to seek to force it, as needful for all Christian commonwealths. Solon being asked whether he had given the best laws to the Athenians, answered, The best for them, the best that they could suffer. So here.[e]

*Sabbath-keeping.*—Of the late venerable Dr. Waugh, his bio-

grapher records that, in his ministerial visitations his nationality was often strongly displayed, and this with most beneficial effect, both in sentiment and language. When, without any adequate cause, any of his hearers had failed to attend public ordinances so regularly as he could have wished, and would plead their distance from the chapel as an excuse, he would exclaim, in the emphatic northern dialect, which he used on familiar occasions to employ,—"What, you from Scotland! from Melrose! from Gala Water! from Selkirk! and it's a hard matter to walk a mile or two to serve your Maker one day in the week! How many miles did you walk at Selkirk?" "Five!" "Five! and can ye no walk twa here? Man! your father walked ten or twall (twelve) out, and as many hame every Sunday i' the year; and your mither too, aften. I've seen a hunder folk and mair, that aye walked six or seven, men, women, and bairns too; and at the sacraments folk walked fifteen, and some twenty miles. How far will you walk the morn to mak half-a-crown? Fie! Fie! But ye'll be out wi' a' your household next Sabbath, I ken. O, my man, mind the bairns! If you love their souls, dinna let them get into the habit of biding awa' fra the kirk. All the evils among young folk in London arise from their not attending God's house." Such remonstrances, it may easily be imagined, were not often urged in vain.

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**15—17.** (15) **bread . . hunger,**[a] Ex. xvi. 4, *ff.* **water,**[b] Ex. xvii. 6. **the land . . them,**[c] De. i. 8. (16) **fathers . . necks,**[d] De. xxxi. 27. (17) **and . . obey,**[e] Nu. xiv. 4.

*Pardoning mercy.*—I. The text prefers an important charge. 1. A charge of obstinate disobedience; 2. Of criminal forgetfulness; 3. Of hardened impenitence. II. The text contains a gracious declaration: "Thou art a God ready to pardon," etc. The truth of this is manifest and undeniable. Consider—1. The perfections of the Divine character; 2. The glorious scheme of human redemption; 3. The testimonies and promises of Scripture; 4. The multitudes that have obtained forgiveness. III. The text suggests appropriate instruction. We may here learn—1. The necessity of seeking forgiveness; 2. The possibility of obtaining forgiveness; 3. The felicity of participating in forgiveness.

*Note on verse* 12.—After a heavy fall of rain, and when a gentle east wind was beginning to clear the sky, Gotthold walked forth into the fields, thanked his God for the fertilising storm, and, lifting his eyes to the heavens, and beholding the rolling clouds, said to himself: "My God, there go the chariots in which (to use the language of weak men) Thou ridest forth to inspect Thy fields and gardens, Thy meadows, forests, and plains. Beggars are wont to run behind the chariots of the wealthy, and cry aloud for alms. To Thee, O God, we are all beggars; and when Thou ridest forth on Thy chariot of clouds, we cry after Thee, 'Give us this day our daily bread.' The clouds are also the pitcher with which, like a gardener, Thou waterest the sultry globe in times of drought. They are the pipes by which Thou conductest moisture into the firmament, and thence causest it to descend in rain, and bless the earth. They are Thy storehouses, richly filled with wine, beer, oil, butter, corn, and malt; and Thou openest it in Thy goodness, and satisfiest the desire of everything that lives. They are great curtains, which at Thy

"The painter's soul is no doubt thrown into his painting, and the sculptor's and architect's into their statues and buildings; but their souls meanwhile exist apart, and are capable of other acts besides these. In a sense, as true as it is grand, the soul of the Creator is streaming through the order and life of creation; but meanwhile He exists independent of and far above them."—*McCosh.*

**their past disobedience is owned**

*a* Ps. lxxviii. 23, 24, cv. 40; Jo. vi. 31.

*b* Nu. xx. 10, 11; Ps. lxxviii. 15—20, cv. 41, cxiv. 8.

*c* Nu. xiv. 30.

*d* 2 Ki. xvii. 14; 2 Ch. xxx. 8; Jer. xix. 15; Ac. vii. 51.

*e* Ps lxxviii. 10, 11, 42, 43, cvi. 13, 21, 24, 25; Ex. xxxiv. 6; Nu. xiv. 18; Ps. lxxxvi. 5; Joel ii. 13; Jon. iv. 2.

*v.* 17. *W. Jay, Sht. Disc.* iv. 95.

"A God of pardon is one that hath set up a pardon-office; where pardons for penitents lie ready sealed, that the sinner may not be to seek, that he may not perish in his sins while the plaister is in providing. It is our comfort that we have to do with a forgiving, sin-pardoning God, that doth it naturally, plen-

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tifully, constantly. This should be a perpetual picture in our hearts"—*Trapp.*
*f Gotthold.*

**mercies and sins in the wilderness**

*a* Ps. xcix. 8, cvi. 45; Ex. xiii. 32; Nu. xiv. 14; 1 Co. x. 1.
*b* Isa. lxiii. 11.
*c* Jos. v. 12.
*d* 1 Co. x. 4.
*e* De. viii. 4, xxix. 5.
"It is calculated that there was wanted of manna 94,466 bushels every day, or 1,370,002,600 bushels in the whole forty years of the children of Israel's sojourn in the wilderness, yet, when did the supply fail one single day?"—*Bowes.*
*f Bowes.*

good pleasure Thou drawest as a covering over the plants, that they may not be withered and destroyed by the continuance of the heat. Not seldom too are they the arsenal in which Thou keepest Thine artillery of thunder and lightning, in order, at set times, to strike the children of men with reverential awe, or inflict upon them some great punishment."*f*

**18—21.** (18) **calf,** *etc.*, Ex. xxxii. 4. (19) **manifold mercies,** *etc.*,[a] Ps. lxxviii. 38. (20) **spirit,** *etc.*,[b] Nu. xi. 17. **manna,**[c] Ex. xvi. 35. **water,**[d] Ex. xvii. 6. (21) **sustain,**[e] *etc.*, De. ii. 7.

*God's goodness in the past.*—I. This should not be forgotten. II. The remembrance of it should affect our present feelings towards Him. III. What God has once been, that He will ever be. IV. The past should teach us gratitude and trust.

*Providential care.*—Luther was one day walking with his brother, when a violent storm of thunder and lightning overtook him; his brother was struck dead upon the spot, and the future reformer spared. Bunyan enlisted as a soldier, but when the time to leave home came, he got some person to go for him as his substitute; the man was shot, and Bunyan spared. Doddridge, when born, was so weakly an infant that it was thought he was dead; but a nurse, standing by, fancied she saw some symptoms of life, and the feeble spark was saved from being extinguished. Wesley when a child was only just preserved from fire; almost the moment he was rescued the roof of the house fell in. Philip Henry had a similar escape. Dr. Adam Clarke was narrowly recovered from being drowned when a boy. Charles of Balk put his saddle-bags into a wrong boat, as he thought; but the boat in which he intended to go was lost, and every hand drowned. The originator of the Bible Society was preserved.*f*

**22—25.** (22) **and . . corners,** filled up every corner of the land with them. **Sihon,** Nu. xxi. 24, 32—35. (23) **their . . heaven,**[a] Ge. xv. 5. (24) **thou . . kings,** *etc.*,[b] Jos. xxiii. 4. (25) **and . . cities,** *etc.*,[c] De. iii. 5.

*The recognition of God.*—In all companies and in all places remember the presence of God; walk continually as if under the view of His all-seeing and observing eye; often considering that God is everywhere present, and then you will study to be everywhere holy. God is everywhere present by His power. He rolls the orbs of heaven with His hand, He fixes the earth with His foot, He guides all the creatures with His eye, and refreshes them with His influence; and makes the powers of hell to shake with His terrors. There is not one hollowness in the bottom of the sea, but He shows Himself to be Lord of it, by sustaining there the creatures that come to dwell in it; and in the wilderness, the bittern and the stork, the lion and the elephant, live upon His provisions, and feel the force of His almightiness. Let everything you see represent to your spirit the presence, the excellency, and the power of God. In the face of the sun you may see God's beauty; in the fire you may feel His heat warming; in the water His gentleness to refresh you; it is the dew of heaven that makes your field give you bread; in all things it is the bounty of God that ministers to your necessities. This consideration of the Divine presence is apt to produce joy and rejoicing in God: we delight in being of the same household with God; He is with us in our natural actions to preserve us, in

**their possession of Canaan**

*a* Ge. xxii. 17.
*b* Jos. xxiv. 11, 12; Ps. xliv. 1—3.
*c* Nu. xiii. 27; De. viii. 7, 8; Ez. xx. 6; Ps. cv. 44; Jos. xxiv. 13; De. vi. 11.
"God gave them all. . . This Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged, after he had been turneda-grazing, and Charles V., Emperor of Germany, who in twenty eight battles in America, waged by Cortez and Pizarro, won eight-and-twenty kingdoms. And what a world of nations are swallowed up in the greatness of the Turkish Empire!

our recreations to restrain us, in our public actions to applaud or reprove us, in our private to observe us, in our sleep to guard us, in our watchings to refresh us; and if we walk with God in all His ways, as He walks with us in all ours, we shall find perpetual reasons to enable us to keep that rule of His, "Rejoice in the Lord always." [d]

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America hath the happiness to be out of their reach."—*Trapp.*

*d Bp. Taylor.*

**26—29.** (26) **prophets,**[a] Ma. xxiii. 37. (27) **saviours,**[b] deliverers; as in the cases of Judges. (28) **rest,**[c] fr. war, or oppression. (29) **and . . shoulder,**[d] like an ox shrinking fr., or resisting, the yoke.

*Great saviours.*—I. In the course of a nation's history God in His goodness sends great deliverances—as Cromwell and William the Third, etc. II. This is as true of personal history. III. There is only one Saviour from sin and its consequence. A great One.

*The thoughts of God.*—In one sense we are everywhere surrounded with God's thoughts. Outer nature is a majestic volume of these. His sublime thoughts are the everlasting mountains; His lofty thoughts the distant stars; His terrible thoughts the lightning and tempest, the earthquake and volcano; His minute thoughts of discriminating care the tiny moss and lichen, the tender grass, the lily of the field, and pearly dewdrop; His loving thoughts, the blue sky, the quiet lake, the sunny glade, the budding blossoms and beauteous flowers; His joyful thoughts the singing streams and sparkling waves; His unchanging thoughts, the rock in mid-ocean, on which the waves are in vain spending their fury. But it is not in these mute, undefined, often mysterious symbols, that sinners, redeemed by the blood of Christ, can discover the true Divine "Cardiphonia"—the breathings and utterances of the very heart of a reconciled Father. "He hath magnified His Word above all His names" (Ps. cxxxviii. 2). He "hath in these last days spoken unto us (given expression and utterance to His 'thoughts') by His Son" (Heb. i. 2). It is in Christ that each thought of God becomes "precious"—a ministering angel of comfort and hope, a deep pool of unfathomable grace and love, reflecting the image and the peace of heaven. He is the true ladder of Jacob, upon which thoughts upon thoughts of unutterable tenderness troop down from the upper sanctuary.[e]—*The Bible a chart.*—Here is a roll of charts of a difficult harbour. They were drawn, it may be, by Robert Small. They are handed by him to Admiral Dupont. The Admiral, the moment he sees them, laughs right out, and says, "Do you call this a chart?" It was made with a burnt stick. Robert Small, you know, was a slave, and he had to get his knowledge as other slaves get theirs. He was a pilot in Charlestown harbour, however, and he knows where the shallow places are, where the deep places are, where the obstructions are, and where it is clear sailing; and he makes a rough sketch of the whole vicinity, and puts it into Admiral Dupont's hand, and the Admiral says, "Do you suppose I am going to steer my ships by a chart that a nigger made?" Or he says, "When did you make this? On what kind of a table did you make it? What did you use to make it with?" Does he say this? Under such circumstances what would Admiral Dupont do, who is a sensible man, and who has so much sense that he knows how to employ negroes and take the advantage of their aid? He would say to

**their troubles in the time of the Judges**

*a* Ez. xx. 2; Ac. vii. 52; 1 Th. ii. 15.

*b* Jud. iii. 9.

*c* Ps. cvi. 41, 42; Jud. ii. 14, iii. 8; Ps. lxxviii. 34—36.

*d* Zec. vii. 11; Hos. iv. 16.

"God often lets His people reach the shore as on the planks of a shipwrecked vessel. He deprives us of the cisterns, in order to make us drink out of the fountains of waters. He frequently takes away our supports, not that we may fall to the ground, but that He may Himself become our rod and our staff. The embarrassments of His people are only the festive scaffoldings on which His might, His faithfulness, and His mercy celebrate their triumphs.' —*Dr. F. W. Krummacher.*

*e Dr. Macduff.*

"The lifeboat may have a tasteful bend and beautiful decoration, but these are not the qualities for which I prize it; it was my salvation from the howling sea! So the interest which a regenerate soul takes in the Bible is founded on a personal application to the heart

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of the saving truth which it contains. If there is no taste for this truth, there can be no relish for the Scriptures.' — *J. W. Alexander, D.D.*

The Emperor Theodosius wrote out the New Testament with his own hand, and read some part of it every day.

*f H. W. Beecher.*

**their captivity**

*a* 2 Ki. xvii. 13; 2 Ch. xxxvi. 15; Je. vii. 25, xxv. 4; Hos. vi. 5.

*b* Jer. v. 18.

*c* Da. ix. 14; Ps. cxix. 137.

*v.* 33. *Dr. S. Johnson*, i. 97.

"It is a high point of heavenly wisdom, in the beginning of our petitions, to propound God to ourselves under such holy notions and fit expressions, as wherein we may see an answer to our prayers as here."—*Trapp.*

Erasmus, speaking of Jerome, says, "Whoever learned by heart the whole Scripture, or imbibed or meditated upon it as he did?"

**they profess to be servants of God, and make a covenant**

*a* De. xxviii. 48; Ezr. ix. 9.

*b* 2 Ki. xxiii. 3; 2 Ch. xxxiv. 31;

those under him, "Take a cutter, man it, and go out, and sound, and see if the chart is correct;" and they would find the shoals and channels to be just as they were represented to be; and after they had put the chart to proof, and found it to correspond to the fact, they would report to him, and he would say, "That is a good chart, if a black man did make it. It is true, and that is the reason why it is good." Now, the Bible is a chart. It teaches men how to steer where that sand-bank of temptation is, where that rock of danger is, where that whirling vortex of passion is. The Bible is a chart of salvation: and if a man only knows his course by this, he will go through life, with all its storms, and come safely into the port of heaven. The way to test the Bible is not to criticise it, and compare its rude marking with the more modern ways of making charts: the way to test the Bible is to put your sounding lines into the channel, and try it, and see if it is not true. But that is the test men do not employ *f*

**30—33.** (30) **forbear,** *Heb.* protract over them. **and . . prophets,**[a] 1 Pet. i. 10, 11; 2 Pet. i. 20, 21. **therefore . . lands,** Isa. v. 5, xlii. 24. (31) **nevertheless,** *etc.*,[b] Isa. lvii. 16. (32) **God . . great,** *etc.*, note how this description of God points the next thought. **let . . thee,** if the history of a cottage seem petty in the eyes of the palace; how much smaller must human vicissitudes be in the eye of the Almighty! Things relatively little to Him, may be very great with us. (33) **just . . us,**[c] we have not suffered beyond our deserts. **we . . wickedly,** we as a nation, throughout our history.

*Divine forbearance.*—I. This forbearance of God was marked by constant reproof. Otherwise it might have been construed into approval of their conduct. II. It was marked by constant exhibitions of grace and mercy. III. There is a limit to the forbearance of God. IV. When He at length punishes, all will own that the punishment is just.

*The ways of God.*—Take a straight stick and put it into the water, and it will seem crooked. Why? Because we look upon it through two mediums, air and water: there lies the *deceptio visus;* thence it is that we cannot discern aright. Thus the proceedings of God in His justice, which in themselves are straight, without the least obliquity, seem unto us crooked: that wicked men should prosper, and good men be afflicted; that the Israelites should make the bricks and the Egyptians dwell in the houses; that servants should ride on horseback and princes go on foot; these are things that make the best Christians stagger in their judgments. And why? but because they look upon God's proceedings through a double medium, of flesh and spirit; that so all things seem to go cross, though indeed they are right enough. And hence it is that God's proceedings in His justice are not so well discerned,—the eyes of man alone being not competent judges thereof.

**34—38.** (34) **kings . . fathers,** much less the common people who followed. These great ones. (35) **for . . kingdom,** and yet men will delay the service of God till they acquire wealth, power, etc. (36) **we . . day,** *etc.*,[a] paying tribute to a foreign power, and only here by sufferance. (37) **increase,** profit in form of tribute. (38) **covenant,** a solemn league and covenant. **princes . . it,**[b] as our representatives, and with our assent.

*Sin the source of loss* (*v.* 37).—These people attribute all their losses and afflictions to their sins. Has a man lost his wife or child, he says, "*Enpāvatin-nemityam*, for the sake of my sins. this evil has come upon me." "Why, friend, do you live in this strange land?" "Because of my sins." No people can refer more to sin as the source of their misery, and yet none appear more anxious to commit it. "The sins of my ancestors, the sins of my ancestors are in this habitation, says the old sinner, who wishes to escape the sight of his own.[c]

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Neh. x. 29; Ezr. x. 3.

*c Roberts.*

## *CHAPTER THE TENTH.*

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**the signing of the covenant**

**by Nehemiah and the rulers**

**1—8. now . . Nehemiah,** *etc.*,[a] these took the lead as representative men.

*The solemn league and covenant.*—I. It was entered into by all the people with common consent. II It was signed first of all by the leaders of the people as an example to the others. III. All regarded themselves as bound by what the leaders had done in their name, and on their behalf.

*A witness.*—In a village church in one of the midland counties, at the side of a beautiful tomb in the chancel, there is a flourishing young forest-tree some nine or ten feet high. Its history is remarkable. One Lord's-day, a boy, talking with his companions in this part of the chancel, was detected by the schoolmaster playing with a horse-chesnut. The master took it from him and threw it on one side. It flew over the tomb, and settled between that and the wall. There for many weeks it remained, unthought of. Having lodged in a crevice, where some considerable quantity of dust appears to have lodged beforehand, it found sufficient soil and moisture to take root. By-and-by its existence was discovered; and, the fact being thought interesting and uncommon, it was allowed to remain. It was a witness, *a speaking tree:* it was the living witness of that boy who played in God's house on the Sabbath.[b]

*a* Ne. xii. 1—7; Ezr. ii. 1, etc.

"Example has more followers than reason. We unconsciously imitate what pleases us, and insensibly approximate to the characters we most admire. In this way a generous habit of thought and of action carries with it an incalculable influence."—*Bovee.*

*b Bibl. Treas.*

**by the Levites**

**9—13. Levites,**[a] these prob. signed on behalf of their order.

*A material witness.*—A rich old citizen of Bergamo had lent to one of his countrymen at Florence four hundred crowns, which he advanced without any witness, and without requiring a written acknowledgment. When the stipulated time had elapsed, the creditor required his money; but the borrower, well apprised that no proof could be brought against him, positively denied that he had ever received it. After many fruitless attempts to recover it, the lender was advised to resort to the duke, who would find some method of doing him justice. Alessandro accordingly ordered both the parties before him; and after hearing the assertions of the one, and the positive denial of the other, he turned to the creditor, saying, "Is it possible, then, friend, that you can have lent your money when no one was present?" "There was no one indeed," replied the creditor: "I counted out the money to him on a post." "Go bring the post then, this instant," said the duke, "and I will make it confess the truth." The creditor, though astonished on receiving such an order, hastened to obey, having first received a secret caution from the duke not to be very speedy in his return. Meantime

*a* Ne. xii. 8, 9, 24; Ezr. ii. 40.

"Nothing enlarges the gulf of atheism more than the wide passage which lies between the faith and lives of men pretending to be Christians."—*Stillingfleet.*

"The Word of God is the water of life; the more ye lave it forth, the fresher it runneth: it is the fire of God's glory; the more ye blow it, the clearer it burneth: it is the corn of the

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Lord's field; the better ye grind it, the more it yieldeth: it is the bread of heaven; the more it is broken and given forth, the more it remaineth: it is the sword of the Spirit; the more it is scoured, the brighter it shineth." — *Bp. Jewel.*

the duke employed himself in transacting the affairs of his other suitors, till at length, turning to the borrower, he said, "This man stays a long time with his post." "It is so heavy, sir," replied the other, "that he could not have yet brought it." Again Alessandro left him, and returning some time afterward, carelessly exclaimed, "What kind of men are they that lend their money without evidence? Was there no one present but the post?" "No, indeed, sir!" replied the knave. "The post is a good witness, then," said the duke, "and shall make thee pay the man his money."

**by the chiefs of the people**
*a* Ne. vii. 6—27; Ezr. ii. 3, 6—8, 10—17, 19, 28.
*b R. Brown.*

**14—27. chief . . people,**[a] the people thus represented, as every one in the country could not possibly affix their names.

*The unity of the human race.*—Humanity is a continuous chain, one link fastened to another and following it, not as having in itself wholly independent action, but as being put into motion by the link that preceded it. It is the majestic march of the locomotive and its train along the railway of time. Carriage after carriage passes, one generation succeeding another, but each drawn on by its last predecessor, the coupling-chain binding one to another into a continuous whole: as is a railway train, so is humanity throughout all its generations—one.[b]

**the people promise to keep the law**
*a* Ps. cxix. 106; De. xxix. 12—15.
*b* De. vii. 3; Ex. xxxiv. 14—16.
*c* De. v. 12; Ex. xx. 10; Le. xxiii. 3.
*d* Ex. xxiii. 10, 11; Le. xxv. 4; De. xv. 1, 2.

**28—31.** (28) **rest,** *etc.*, regarded themselves as having personally signed; gave their full assent to what their representatives now did. (29) **clave to,** agreed with. **curse . . oath,** thus solemnly pledged themselves. **observe,** *etc.*,[a] and now follow the chief points in their solemn engagement. (30) **that . . give,** *etc.*, but follow the law of God.[b] (31) **sabbath,**[c] the proper observance would save men fr. many sins. **that . . year,**[d] they would keep not only the Sabbath-day, but also the Sabbatic year.

"I knew a man who was governed by no one principle in the world but fear. He had no manner of objection to going to church, but lest 'the devil might take it ill.'"—*Sterne.*

"I have all reverence for principles which grow out of sentiments. But as to sentiments which grow out of principles, you shall scarcely build a house of cards thereon."—*Jacobi.*

"No man is so insignificant as to be sure his example can do no hurt."—*Lord Clarendon.*

*A Sabbath-keeping millowner.*—At the second annual meeting of the Society for Promoting the Due Observance of the Lord's Day, the Rev. H. Stowell stated that, at a large meeting which was held at Manchester, to petition the Legislature on the better observance of the Sabbath, a leading spinner came forward, and said that there was nothing more common than to hear from his brother spinners and master manufacturers this assertion, "If you stop the mill altogether on Sunday you must frequently stop it on Monday also; because, if the engine gets out of order, or any other necessary repair be required, it must be done on the Sunday, or the mill cannot proceed on the Monday." "Now, all this seems mighty plausible," said the good man, "but I can prove it to be false; for in my mill I never suffer a stroke to be struck on the Sabbath; and on one occasion my boiler had suffered a misfortune on a Saturday, and I feared the mill must stop on the Monday, but determined to try what could be done. I sent for a leading engineer, and said to him, 'Can you have the mill ready to work on Monday morning?' 'Yes, certainly I can.' 'But then,' said I, 'you mean to work on Sunday?' 'Of course, sir.' 'But,' said I, 'you shall not do it in my mill.' 'But I cannot mend the boiler, if I do not,' said he. I said, 'I do not care, you shall not work in my mill on Sunday. I would rather that my mill stood the whole of Monday than that the Sabbath should be violated in it!' The man said, 'You are different from all other masters.' I said, 'My Bible, not the conduct of others,

is my rule; and you must do it without working on Sunday, or I will try to get somebody else.' This had the desired effect: they set to work, and worked till twelve o'clock on the Saturday night, and began again at twelve o'clock on the Sunday night; and the repairs were finished, and the mill was in full work, at the usual hour on Monday morning."

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**they make ordinances for themselves**

**32, 33.** (32) **third . . shekel,**[a] this ordinance wh. they made for themselves was within the spirit of the law. (33) **for,** *etc.*,[b] this was the purpose of this poll-tax, levied upon all above the age of twenty.

a Ex. xxx. 13; 2 Ch. xxiv. 6. It was half a shekel in our Lord's time, Ma. xvii. 24. War and captivity had reduced their resources, and they had to pay foreign tribute, hence they agreed to a third.

b Nu. xxviii. 2—6, 9—15.

*Christian duty.*—The duty of a Christian is easy in persecution, it is clear under tyranny, it is evident in despite of heresy, it is one in the midst of schism, it is determined amongst infinite disputes; being like a rock in the sea, which is beaten with the tide, and washed with retiring waters, and encompassed with mists, and appears in several figures, but it always dips its foot in the same bottom, and remains the same in calms and storms, and survives the revolution of ten thousand tides, and there shall dwell till time and tides shall be no more. So is our duty uniform and constant, open and notorious, variously represented, but in the same manner exacted; and in the interest of our souls God hath not exposed us to uncertainty, or the variety of anything that can change; and it is by the grace and mercy of God put into the power of every Christian to do that which God through Jesus Christ will accept to salvation; and neither men nor devils shall hinder it, unless we list ourselves.[c]—*Duty and obligation.*—All duty depends upon moral obligation which subsists between man and man, or man and his Maker; in this abstract sense, therefore, there can be no duty without a previous obligation, and where there is an obligation it involves a duty: but in the vulgar acceptation, duty is applicable to the conduct of men in their various relations; obligation only to particular circumstances or modes of action; we have duties to perform as parents and children, as husbands and wives, as rulers and subjects, as neighbours and citizens. The debtor is under obligation to discharge a debt; and he who has promised is under obligation to fulfil his promise; a conscientious man, therefore, never loses sight of the obligations which he has at different times to discharge.[d]

c *Bp. Taylor.*

Two Port-Royal divines visiting, Arnauld desired Nicole to assist him in a new work; when the latter observed, "We are now old; is it not time to rest?" 'Rest!" returned Arnauld: "have we not all eternity to rest in?"

d *G. Crabb.*

**34—37.** (34) **wood offering,**[a] for use of temple, fuel for sacrifices, etc.[b] (35) **firstfruits,**[c] Ex. xxiii. 19. (36) **firstborn,**[d] Ex. xiii. 2. (37) **firstfruits,** *etc.*,[e] Nu. xv. 21.

**they cast lots for offerings**

a Isa. xl. 16.

b On the 22nd of Ab, the 5th mo.; *Josephus, Bel.* ii. 17, 6.

c Le. xxiii. 10; Nu. xviii. 12; De. xxvi. 2.

d Le. xxvii. 26, 27; Nu. xviii. 15; De. xii. 6.

e Le. xxvii. 30; 2 Ch. xxxi. 11, 12.

*Duty moulded by religion.*—Suppose the case of a young man entering upon life, with the sense of duty beginning to form in him, or at least working itself clear and firm in his mind, how directly must all his views of the near and the present be affected by his thought of the Supreme and the future! It may not be that he has any distinct consciousness of moulding his views of the one by the other. But not the less surely will the "life that now is" to him be moulded by the character of the life that he believes to be above him and before him. The lower will take its colour from the higher—the "near" from the "heavenly horizon." There will be a light or a darkness shed around his present path in proportion as his faith opens a steady or a hesitating—a comprehensive or a partial—gaze into the future and unseen.[f]

f *Dr. Tulloch.*

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**they promise not to forsake the house of their God**

38, 39. (38) **priest . . tithes,** the priests were to unite in this duty for their own sake, that they might have their share, and for the people's sake, to see that they gave the due proportion. (39) **we . . God,**[a] by wh. all our homes are blessed: and in wh. He is worshipped from whom all prosperity — personal and national—comes.

*The house of God*—We call our churches temples. Now you know, or ought to know, they are not temples. They have never had, never can have, anything whatever to do with temples. They are "synagogues," — "gathering-places," — where you gather yourselves together as an assembly; and by not calling them so, you again miss the force of another mighty text—"Thou, when thou prayest, shall not be as the hypocrites are; for they love to pray standing in the churches (we should translate it), that they may be seen of men; but thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is"—not in chancel nor in aisle, but —"in secret." Now you feel, as I say this to you—I know you feel—as if I were trying to take away the honour of your churches. Not so; I am trying to prove to you the honour of your houses and your hills; I am trying to show you not that the church is not sacred but that the whole earth is. I would have you feel what careless, what constant, what infectious sin there is in all modes of thought whereby, in calling your churches only "holy," you call your hearths and home profane; and have separated yourselves from the heathen by casting all your household gods to the ground, instead of recognising, in the place of their many and feeble Lares, the presence of your One and Mighty Lord.[b]—*Duty more than sacrifice.*—Sacrifice was never despised by Christ, but relatively He undervalued it. The idea of sacrifice among the Jews had taken precedence of humanity, justice, and right. Christ said. "If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." What does it mean but this, Do not think that sacrifice to God is the highest religious duty? Sacrifice depends for its value on preceding moral qualities. A principle is higher than the ordinance which you take to exhibit that principle. The life of religion in the soul is first in importance; the instruments by which you develop that life are of secondary consideration.[c]

*a* He. x. 25.

r. 39. *M. Clarke*, 66; *J. Cawood*, 1, 171.

Christians in Greenland very seldom, if ever, absent themselves from public worship on account of the weather. When it is so cold that their breath freezes, and forms icicles on their faces, they yet go long distances. — men, women, and children, — through snow and ice and storm, to the house of prayer.

*b Ruskin.*

"As much as lies in thy power, shun the resort of worldly men; for much conversation on secular business, however innocently managed, greatly retards the progress of the spiritual life." —*Kempis.*

*c H. W. Beecher.*

## *CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH.*

**the rulers dwell at Jerusalem**

1—6. (1) **rulers . . Jerusalem,** true patriots take the post of honour and danger. **rest . . lots,** *etc.*, a curious but effective mode of securing a population for the capital. (2) **that . . themselves,**[a] their service the more valuable bec. voluntary. (3) **province,**[b] Judah. **but . . cities,** 1 Ch. ix. 2. **Israel,**[c] the nation as a whole. (4) **dwelt . . Judah,** *etc.*, 1 Ch. ix. 3, *ff.*

*The Church's benefactor.*—I. This was no doubt a post of honour, but it was also one of great danger. II. But it was also a post of great need and usefulness. III. Those who offered themselves for this post deserved and obtained the blessing of

*a* Jud. v. 9.

*b* Ezr. ii. 1.

*c* Ezr. ii. 70, x. 11: Ne. vii. 61, xiii. 3.

No one can make sacrifice for another, without

the people. IV. The Church has now posts of great honour and of great difficulty, yet associated with useful toil. V. Ministers, missionaries, S. S. teachers, arbitrators, deputations, etc., often deserve more thanks than they get.

*Earthly work developed in eternity.*—There are many of you that seem to yourselves to have done little on earth. You do not know what you have done. God writes you a cheque, and seals it up, and gives it to you to carry to the bank, and you will not know how much it is till it is paid, and then you will be surprised. You do not know what you have done in your own family, to the poor, or for those that live next door to you. You, it may be, teach your servant to read the word of life, and he directs his attention to the salvation of his poor heathen fellows, and through him many are saved, and in the other world how your work will open up! [d]

**7—9.** (7) **Sallu,** 1 Ch. ix. 7. (9) **second . . city,** either second in command,[a] or over second part of the city.[b]

*The power of work.*—"To show capacity," a Frenchman described as the end of a speech in debate. "No," said an Englishman, "but to set your shoulder at the wheel, to advance the business." Sir S. Romilly refused to speak in popular assemblies, confining himself to the House of Commons, where a measure can be carried by a speech. The business of the House of Commons is conducted by a few persons, but these are hard-worked. Sir Robert Peel "knew the Blue Books by heart." His colleagues and rivals carry Hansard in their heads. The high civil and legal offices are not beds of ease, but posts which exact frightful amounts of mental labour. Many of the great leaders, like Pitt, Canning, Castlereagh, Romilly, are soon worked to death. They are excellent judges in England of a good worker, and when they find one like Clarendon, Sir Philip Warwick, Sir William Coventry, Ashley, Burke, Thurlow, Mansfield, Pitt, Eldon, Peel, or Russell, there is nothing too good or too high for him.[c]

**10-14.** (10) **priests,** 1 Ch. ix. 10. **Jedaiah,** *etc.*, prob. names of chiefs of classes of priests. (12) **eight . . two,** 1 Ch. ix. 13. (14) **son . . men,**[a] or the son of Haggedolim; Hag. being a prop. name.

*The service of God.*—"I hope," said Mr. Knill, when a missionary at St. Petersburg, in a letter, "the subject of devoting ourselves and our children to God and to His service will be thought more of, and more acted upon, than it has been hitherto. I am more and more convinced, that if St. Paul had ever preached from 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature,' he would have laid great stress upon the word 'go.' On your peril, do not substitute another word for 'go.' Preach is a good word. Direct is a good word. Collect is a good word. Give is a good word. They are all important in their places, and cannot be dispensed with. The Lord bless and prosper those who are so engaged! But still lay the stress on the word 'go;' for 'how can they hear without a preacher? and how can they preach except they be sent?' Six hundred millions of the human race are perishing, and there are perhaps thirty among all the Christians in Britain, who are at this moment preparing to 'go.' Alas! my hand shakes, and my heart trembles. 'Is this thy kindness to thy Friend?'"

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establishing a new bond of interest between them. A boy is rescued from death, and, ever after, he loves to tell, "That man once saved my life." The rescuer, too, feels a special interest in the one he has saved.

*d H. W. Beecher.*

**the sons of Benjamin**

*a* As Vulg., LXX.

*b* As *Gesenius.*

"To guard the mind against the temptation of thinking that there are no good people, say to them, 'Be such as you would like to see others,' and you will find those who resemble you."—*Bossuet.*

*c Emerson.*

**the priests**

*a* So LXX. and Vulg.

"In this world there is one godlike thing, the essence of all that ever was or ever will be of godlike in this world,—the veneration done to human worth by the hearts of men."—*Carlyle.*

"All look as if they knew the day, the hour; and felt with man the need and joy of thanks. Well I ween, where sacrifice is not is never fire."—*Bailey.*

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**the Levites**

*a* 1 Ch. xxvi. 29.

*b* So *Wordsworth*, but some think those things wh. were done outside, or in the country, such as collecting provisions.
*c Dr. Jamieson.*
*d Cawdray.*

**the residue of Israel**

*a* Ezr. vi. 8, 9, vii. 20.

*b* No doubt this was ordered by request of Neh., or Ezra.

It was not uncommon for soldiers who had to undergo amputation to drive the gloom away with songs. One, as he lay upon the amputating-table, quieted his pain by making the hospital resound with the hymn, "How sweet the name of Jesus sounds!" etc. Another, in like circumstances, sang, "There'll be no more sorrow there," etc.

**Pethahiah**

*a* Ge. xxiii. 2.

*b* Josh. xv. 45.

*c* Josh. xv. 21.

"Labour is one of the great elements of society, — the greatest substantial interest on which we all stand."—*D. Webster.*

**villages of the craftsmen, etc.**

**15—19.** (16) **outward business,**[a] as civil and judicial affairs.[b] (17) **begin . . prayer,** one who, with a loud clear voice, led the rest. "The leader of the choir which chaunted the public praise at the time of the morning and evening sacrifice."[c]

*Spiritual works.*—As in a building, after the foundation is laid, great labour, diligence, and expense are necessary to finish and furnish it; even so in the heavenly edifice of our soul. All our lifetime is to be employed in building up the walls and other parts of our spiritual structure, by the exercise of all virtues, and by diligent observance of God's commandments, without which it will be as useless to look for salvation, as it would be to expect to have a house because a foundation had been laid.[d]

**20—23.** (20) **Ophel,** iii. 26. (22) **over . . God,** as dist. fr. "outward" business, *v.* 16. (23) **for . . them,**[a] *i.e.* king of Persia.[b] **portion,** or a sure ordinance. **due . . day,** as their service so their pay was, daily.

*The singers' portion.*—I. The service of song in the house of the Lord is one of the most important parts of Divine worship. II. Those who take part in this should be persons with hearts in sympathy with the Being praised, and with the congregation whose praises they lead. III. Too often the singers' portion is much criticism and few thanks from those who have the advantage of their services, and who know little of music or the difficulties of singers. IV. Under the temple ritual, the singers were a paid choir; but then they gave their whole time to this work, and their duties were very onerous. V. The singers' best portion is the joy and satisfaction felt by those who know that they are offering the gift of a sweet voice to make the service of God attractive to those who are without.

*Singing in eternity.*—A young lady who had an exquisitely sweet voice, but who had no love for the Saviour in her heart, and lived only for the pleasures of the world, was one day in company with an earnest Christian minister, who knew her well. After hearing her sing a song with great feeling and power, he went to her side, and in a low voice said, "You have a beautiful voice; where will you sing in eternity?" The "word in season" was like an arrow piercing her heart; she could not forget it; and had no rest until she found rest in Jesus.

**24—29** (24) **king's . . people,** an official who adjusted civil matters, or fiscal concerns. (25) **Kirjath-arba,** Hebron.[a] **Dibon,** Josh. xv. 22. **villages,** *lit.* daughters.[b] **Jekabzeel,** Kabzeel.[c] (26—29) *See* Josh. xv. 26—40.

*The benefit of work.*—Men who have half a dozen irons in the fire are not the men to go crazy. It is the man of voluntary or compelled leisure who mopes and pines, and thinks himself into the madhouse or the grave. Motion is all Nature's law. Action is man's salvation, physical and mental. And yet nine men out of ten are wistfully looking forward to the coveted hour when they shall have leisure to do nothing, or something only if they feel to like it—the very syren that has lured to death many a "successful" man. He only is truly wise who lays himself out to work till life's latest hour; and that is the man who will live the longest, and live to the most purpose.

**30—36.** (30) **dwelt . . Hinnom,** this scattered through the land S. of Jerus. (31) **Geba,**[a] Josh. xii. 12—24. (35) **Lod . .**

**Ono,**[b] Ezr. ii. 33. **the . . craftsmen,** they appear to have dwelt together for convenience of their calling.[c] (36) **Levites . . Benjamin,** those who were not in Jerus. had settlements here.

*Exhortation to work.*—Weep with them that weep, if you cannot relieve them. Bestow personal service, if you cannot give gold. Teach children. if you be not competent as an instructor of men. Be a support to the household. if you are not able to become a pillar of the State. Be a lamp in the chamber, if you cannot be a star in the sky. Gladden the circle of home, if it transcend your powers to illumine the town. Talk to the few, if you have no vocation to preach to the crowd.[d]—*Conviction.*—Conviction, were it never so excellent, is worthless till it convert itself into conduct. Nay, properly, conviction is not possible till then: inasmuch as all speculation is by nature endless. formless. a vortex amid vortices: only by a felt indubitable certainty of experience does it find any centre to revolve round, and so fashion itself into a system. Most true is it, as a wise man teaches us, that "doubt of any sort cannot be removed except by action." On which ground. too. let him who gropes painfully in darkness or uncertain light, and prays vehemently that the dawn may ripen into day. lay this other precept well to heart, which to me was of invalvable service: "Do the duty which lies nearest thee," which thou knowest to be a duty! Thy second duty will already have become clearer.[e]

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*a* Ezr. ii. 26—35.

*b* Ne. vi. 2, vii. 37.

*c* Thus the bakers, Jer. xxxvii. 21. In London there are curious examples of trade settlements; as publishers in Paternoster Row; watchmakers in Clerkenwell; weavers in Spitalfields, etc.

*d* *S. Coley.*

*e* *Carlyle.*

"Toil and be strong. By toil the flaccid nerves grow firm and gain a more compacted tone." —*John Armstrong.*

## *CHAPTER THE TWELFTH.*

B.C. *cir.* 536.

**1—9.** (1) **now . . priests,** *i.e.*, *v.* 7, "the chief of the priests," the heads of the 24 courses,[a] only 4 of wh. returned fr. the captivity,[b] wh. 4 were divided by Joshua, or Zerubbabel. into orig. num., of these 22 are enumerated here, and 20 in *vv.* 12—21. **Ezra,** not *the* Ezra.[c] (4) **Abijah,** ancestor of Jo. the Baptist.[d] (8) **Levites,** *etc.*, Ezr. ii. 40. (9) **watches,** or stations. *v.* 24, "places where they stood officiating."

**priests, etc., who went up with Zerubbabel**

*a* 1 Ch. xxiv. 1—20.

*b* vii 39—42; Ezr. ii. 36—39.

*c* Who returned B.C. 458, 78 yrs. aft. return of Zerubbabel, and laboured with Neh. 100 yrs. aft. that return.

*d* Lu. i. 5.

*The sphere of work springing from the sphere of sin.*—Bad men are usually acquainted with human life. They know the dispositions of their fellow-men, and whatever knowledge there is of bad men they have. And such men are bound to consecrate their knowledge and to bring it into the service of the Lord Jesus Christ, who has forgiven them and renewed their life, if they are born again. No man ought to be so glad to pluck men out of the burning, as those men who have been themselves brands in the burning, and have been rescued. If a man has been rescued from drunkenness. he ought to take a special interest in those who are in that burning realm. If a man has been a gambler, and is converted from his wicked way. that ought to be a sphere in which he feels peculiarly called to labour. If a man has been a dissipated man. he. more than all others. ought to feel that he is an apostle to the Gentiles in that regard. If a man has from his youth gone step by step down toward wickedness, when he is converted he ought not to be ashamed of his past life in such a way that he will not use it for the good of others.[e]

"It is only by labour that thought can be made healthy, and only by thought that labour can be made happy, the two cannot be separated with impunity." —*Ruskin.*

*e* *H. W. Beecher.*

**10—21.** (10) **Jeshua,** "important enumeration. as establishing individual purity of descent." (11) **Joiada,** whose son mar.

**genealogy of the high priest**

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a dau. of Sanballat.[a] **Jaddua,** son of Jonathan, *v.* 22. (12) **days . . fathers,** as in the days of Jeshua; the sons filled the priestly office in the room of their fathers, though some were yet alive.

*Labour and prayer.*—Adam had tilled the ground, and made himself a garden full of plants and trees. He rested himself, with his wife and children, upon the brow of a hill. The watcher of Eden came to them; but he was without his flaming sword, and his countenance was kind. He saluted them, and said, "Behold! no more do fruits grow of themselves for you: you must labour to eat bread in the sweat of your brow; but, after your toil, you rejoice in the fruit acquired." "His goodness is great, even when He chasteneth," said Adam. "But formerly Jehovah was nearer to us, and blessed us. What have we to atone for this?" "Prayer," answered the watcher. "Toil is the earthly, prayer the heavenly gift of Jehovah." Then Adam lifted up his face, and gave thanks, and prayed.[b]

**22—26.** (22) **Levites . . fathers,** those were registered who were chief of the fathers. **also . . priests,** who were priests. (23) **book . . chronicles,** not the bk. of the sacred canon, but public records of the nation. (24) **ward,** *v.* 9, one company opposite another. (25) **thresholds,** treasuries, or assemblies.

*Workshop of the world.*—There was, and is, a sense in which we are to frown upon this world; that is, we are to frown upon that spirit in the world which represents selfishness, and pride, and lust. But the world is a working place, where we are to be drilled through the instrumentalities of cares, burdens, hopings, bafflings, fears, enterprises, and industries. Why, this is the very wonder of wisdom; it is God's school-house, in which we are to be developed! A man who undertakes to live without these instrumentalities in this natural and business world will come short of his purpose. There may be special exceptions, in which God ministers special blessings. A man living the life of an invalid, and secluded, may have grace according to his day and situation. But when there is such a case it is an exception; whereas the general truth is this: we are to employ the world, and put our bodies into it, with the understanding that God has made all secular things as means of grace to us.[a]

**27—30.** (27) **at . . wall,** he turns to earlier part of the hist.[a] **they . . places,** provincial towns and villages. **cymbals,**[b] instruments of percussion, two metallic discs wh. were struck together. **psalteries,** or viols, stringed, shape uncertain, a kind of lyre with 10 strings, played with both hands. **harps,** stringed, often played with plectrum. (28) **and . . singers,** *i.e.* of the chief singers. **Netophathi,** per. nr. Bethlehem.[c] (29) **for . . villages,** sug. of their num. and importance. **round . . Jerusalem,** country people with strong clear voices: nr. the scene of their chief work. (30) **purified,** *etc.*, that all—the officials, and their work—might be holy to the Lord.

*Christian song.*—Many think song is a luxury which they have a right to deny themselves if they please. Few have thought it a duty that they should be instructed in Christian song themselves, and should teach it to their families; and yet the command to sing is as explicit as the command to pray, and we do not think of neglecting to teach our households to pray. You will bear witness, the greatest trouble of Christian experience is wh-

**certain chief Levites**

*v.* 26 *J. E. Denham, On Death of Geo. III. Ss.* vol. i.

"I find that successful exertion is a powerful means of exhilaration, which discharges itself in good-humour upon others."—*Chalmers.*

*a H. W. Beecher.*

"Letting down buckets into empty wells, and growing old with drawing nothing up.'—*Cowper.*

**the dedication of the walls**

*a* vi. 15, viii. 1—13, etc.; this dedication was in B.C. 444.

*b* 2 Sa. vi. 5; 1 Ch. xiii. 8, xv. 16—28, xvi. 5; two kinds named in Ps. cl. 5; see *Topics,* ii. 122, 123.

*c* vii. 26; 1 Ch. ii. 54, ix. 56.

"Some of the Fathers went so far as to esteem the love of music a sign of predestination, as a thing Divine, and

we may call the liquefaction of thought into emotion. The Greek method of culture was philosophical, and we have followed largely in the same direction. This is an important element in the education of the people, but we find it difficult to express the wine of emotion from the cluster of thought. The wings God has given us to fly up to Him are the wings of song. The lyrical element is the best expression of feeling. All forms of experience have been touched in the poetry of chaunt and song. Why should we neglect these gatherings of expression? Why should you try by thought to get to God, when you can sing your way to Him with half the effort? There is a railroad up Mount Washington. A man who sings through life is like the man who ascends the mountain in the car; the man who does not sing is like the traveller who pants on foot up the steep ascent. Many say, first reason, emotion last. But in the hymn, the same truth may touch all hearts—as well Lord Bacon as the poor slave on the plantation. Singing is the process by which intellectual propositions can be converted into emotion and heart expression.

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reserved for the felicities of heaven itself."—*Sir W. Temple.*

"Music is the fourth great material want of our natures; first, food, then raiment, then shelter, then music."—*Boree.*

In London the harp is used in churches, and we are told that both trumpets and drums have found their way into our religion.

**31—36.** (31) **two . . thanks,** of wh. Neh. and Ezr. were leaders. **one**[a] **. . dung gate,**[b] the parties started in opposite directions, to meet presently and unite in one song of praise.[c] (32) **after them,** the priests led the princes in this giving of thanks. (33) **Ezra,** not the scribe. (35) **trumpets,** Nu. x. 2—8. (36) **musical . . God,** 1 Ch. xxiii. 5.

*Associations of music.*—Once upon a time we knew a schoolboy who, if he but chanced on the street to hear an urchin blowing a whistle, or playing on a Pans pipe, would forthwith conjure up Sicily, Theocritus, Mount Ida, and the Muses in a ring; wild thyme and the drowsy hum of Hyblæan bees, Syrinx, and the old mythologies, with many a sweet old pastoral. Then he would hear the little boy piping sweetly under the great plane-tree by the fountain of Callirhoë—the boy who, when asked where he learnt to play so well, answered with a look of wondering simplicity, that "it piped itself!" He would also listen in reverie to the Genius in the vision of "Mirza," or to the sweet melodies of the Good Genius in "Vathek." He would hear Blake's happy "Songs of Innocence," or the child piping in Sir Philip Sidney's "Arcadia," as if he would never grow old. Each or all would visit him by turns; for then every sound, present or remembered, had its instant and vivid association. Thus for years he walked, continually surrounded by a bright world of enchantment and delight, sweet sounds and visions haunting him, till at times it became difficult to say whether his waking or sleeping dreams were the more real.[d]

the right-hand company

*a* v. 38.

*b* ii. 13, iii. 13.

*c* v. 40.

"A person being once cast upon a desolate island, spent a day in fasting and prayer for his deliverance, but no help came. It occurred to him then to keep a day of thanksgiving and praise, and he had no sooner done it than relief was brought to him. You see, as soon as he began to sing of mercy exercised, the exercise of mercy was renewed to him. The Lord heard the voice of his praise.—*Nevins.*

*d Symington.*

**37—39.** (37) **and . . gate,** ii. 14, iii. 15. **stairs . . David,** iii. 15. **even . . eastward,** iii. 26. (38) **went . . them,** in opp. direction. (38, 39) *See* ii. 1—11 for places named. **they . . gate,**[a] where they met aft. making the circuit of the walls.

*Influence of music on the soul.*—The influence of music upon the emotions of the soul is well known to every one—

"There is in souls a sympathy with sounds."

The soul is awakened, and invited by the spirit of the melody to receive the sentiment uttered in the song. Sweet, affecting music—not the tone of the piano, nor the peals of the organ—but a melodious air, sung by strong and well-disciplined voices,

the left-hand company

*a* Jer. xxxii. 2.

"In mining operations, the full and empty carriages, or vessels, being connected together, those which have been emptied are from time to time raised up an ascent by the descend-

B.C. *cir.* 536.

i . . of those that l . . been filled. l . . this way let the descent of God's mercies, and the gifts bestowed out of His fulness, raise your empty vessels to receive again and again from His inexhaustible treasury all that you need." — *Bickersteth.*

the two companies meet and sing praises

*a* c. 39.

*v.* 43. *G. Williams,* 279.

' Real joy seems distasteful to the human character in its present condition; and if it be felt, it must come from a higher region, for the world is shadowed by sorrow: thorns array the ground, the very clouds, while they weep fertility on our mountains, seem also to shed a tear on man's grave, who departs, unlike the beauties of summer, to return no more; who fades unlike the sons of the forest, which another summer beholds new clothed, when he is unclothed and forgotten."— *Dr. Andrews.*

*b A. Fuller.*

*c Longfellow.*

and accompanied by the flute and viol—such music reaches the fountains of thought and feeling, and,

"Untwisting all the links that tie
The hidden soul of harmony,"

it tinges the emotions with its own hues, whether plaintive or joyous; and it fosters in the heart the sentiment which it conveys, whether it be love of country, or of God, admiration of noble achievement, or of devoted and self-sacrificing affection.

**40—43.** (40) **so stood,** at the prison gate.[a] (41, 42) *See vv.* 32—38 for names. **singers . . loud,** *lit.* made their voice to be heard. A great noise, but full of melody and of heart music. (43) **God . . joy,** hence not mere animal or emotional excitement, but true spiritual joy. **wives . . rejoiced,** happy wives, mothers, children. **joy . . off,** so, our Jerusalem should be the joy of the whole earth.

*The joy of Jerusalem* (*v.* 43).—We have in this verse—I. The record of an interesting event in Jewish history. Their toils completed, they celebrate the event by making the circuit of the walls, and girding the city with praise. Their joy was—1. The joy of gratitude; 2. Of devout love; 3. Of hope; 4. It was universal—wives and children; 5. It was of Divine origin—God had made them to rejoice. II. We have a clear manifestation of a phase of Christian experience—joyousness. How much more reason have we to rejoice in the Lord, to rejoice in hope, etc.! 1. The God of Israel is our God and Father; 2. He is constantly creating occasions of the liveliest joy; 3. It is the duty of His children to rejoice and be glad in Him, and show that theirs is a joy-producing religion. III. We have further a prediction of a glorious future. When the joy of Jerusalem is heard afar off, that will be—1. A happy time for the Church; 2. A hopeful time for the world.

*Praise a help in trouble.*—Praise is the believer's helper in his trials, and his companion after trial. Jehoshaphat's army sang praises before the battle; David sang praises in the cave; Daniel, when the trap was set for his life, prayed and gave thanks three times a day as usual; and Jesus, when He would raise Lazarus, first lift up His heart in thanks to the Father; and before He went to supper, first sang a hymn. So is praise also our solace after trial. Music is sweetest when heard over rivers, where the echo thereof is best rebounded by the waters; and praise for pensiveness, thanks for tears, blessing God over the floods of affliction, makes the sweetest music in the ears of heaven.[b]—*The voices of children.*—There is something exceedingly thrilling in the voices of children singing. Though their music be unskilful, yet it finds its way to the heart with wonderful celerity. Voices of cherubs are they, for they breathe of Paradise; clear, liquid tones, that flow from pure lips and innocent hearts, like the sweetest notes of a flute, or the falling of water from a fountain.[c]

the officers of the temple

*a* 2 Ch. xxxi. 11, 12.

**44—47.** (44) **time . . treasuries,**[a] *etc.*, their intense spiritual joy did not cause them to overlook practical religion, but for which such joy will soon abate. **Judah . . waited,**[b] this was one reason for their attention to the secularities of religion. (45) **kept . . God,** carefully *guarded* their posts and duties. **according,** *etc.*, 1 Ch. xxv., xxvi. (46) **Asaph,** 2 Ch. xxix. 30,

**xxxv. 15.** (47) **sanctified . . Levites,** *etc.*, Nu. xviii. 21—26. *sanctified* = set apart. **children . . Aaron**[c] = priests.

*The effect of music.*—Sultan Amurath laid siege to Bagdad, and, on taking it, gave orders for putting thirty thousand Persians to death, notwithstanding they had submitted, and laid down their arms. Among the victims was a musician, who entreated the executioner to spare him for a moment, that he might speak to the author of the decree. He was brought before Amurath, who permitted him to exhibit a specimen of his art. Like the musician in Homer, he took up a kind of psaltery, and accompanied it with his voice. He sang the capture of Bagdad and the triumph of Amurath. The tones which he drew from the instrument, joined to his strains, rendered the prince unable to restrain the softer emotions of his soul. He suffered him to proceed, until, overpowered with harmony, he melted into tears of pity, and repented of his cruelty. He directed his people to spare the prisoners who yet remained alive, and to give them instant liberty.

B.C. *cir.* 536.

*c* x. 38.

"Music is one of the fairest and most glorious gifts of God, to which Satan is a bitter enemy; for it removes from the heart the weight of sorrow, and the fascination of evil thoughts."—*Luther.*

"Where should this music be—in the air or the earth?"—*Shakespeare.*

## *CHAPTER THE THIRTEENTH.*

B.C. *cir.* 445.

**1—3.** (1) **on . . Moses,** a busy day; note the duties attended to in it. **and . . written,**[a] what we find written in the book we should be willing to practise. We should read in order to learn. (2) **because,** *etc.*, thus the heinousness of the sin of inhospitality was to be marked. **but . . them,** Nu. xxii. 5; Jos. xxiv. 9, 10. **howbeit . . blessing,**[b] God, in His mercy, often brings good out of intended evil. (3) **when . . law,** *etc.*,[c] they earnestly practised what they learned.

**the reading of the law**

*a* De. xxiii. 3, 4.

*b* Nu. xxiii. 11, xxiv. 10.

*c* ix. 2, x. 28.

*The power of the authority of the Bible.*—The mother of a family was married to an infidel who made jest of religion in the presence of his own children; yet she succeeded in bringing them all up in the fear of the Lord. I asked her one day how she preserved them from the influence of a father whose sentiments were so opposed to her own. This was her answer: "Because to the authority of a father I do not oppose the authority of a mother, but that of God. From their earliest years my children have always seen the Bible upon my table. This holy book has constituted the whole of their religious instruction. I was silent that I might allow it to speak. Did they propose a question, did they commit a fault, did they perform a good action, I opened the Bible, and the Bible answered, reproved or encouraged them. The constant reading of the Scriptures has wrought the prodigy which surprises you.[d]

"Authority, though it err like others, hath yet a kind of medicine in itself, that skins the vice of the top."—*Shakespeare.*

"There is nothing sooner overthrows a weak head than opinion of authority: like too strong a liquor for a frail glass."—*Sir P. Sidney.*

*d Adolphe Monod*

**4, 5.** (4) **Eliashib,**[a] the high priest. **having . . chamber,** apartments pertaining to temple. **Tobiah,**[b] notorious enemy of Israel. (5) **prepared . . chamber,** made a state room out of a sacred store-room.

**the alliance of Eliashib and Tobiah**

*a* x. 1.

*b* iv. 3, vi. 12—14, 17—19.

*The true riches.*—Christ's riches are glorious, because His riches are harmless,—they are riches that will not hurt or harm the soul of such that possess them. Never were any made worse by being spiritually rich. The riches of the world have undone many—they have been as thorns to them, by which they have been "pierced through with many sorrows." But he that has Christ and His riches has enough, nay, he has all: he has pardon

Four kinds of pride to be avoided: race pride, face pride, place pride, grace pride.

B.C. *cir.* 445.

*c B. Keach.*

and peace of conscience. What can he desire more that has God and Christ, and a title to heaven? The treasury of Christ is inexhaustible, it can never be drawn dry. Christ gives abundantly out, but never wastes His stores. "O the height, the depth, the breadth, and length of Christ's riches!" [c]

**Nehemiah commands the chambers to be cleaned**

*a* v. 14. Ab. B.C. 432.

*b* 2 Ch. xxix. 5, 15—18.

"He who reforms himself has done more towards reforming the public than a crowd of noisy, impotent patriots." — *Lavater.*

*c Beecher.*

**6—9.** (6) **but . . Jerusalem,**[a] and this advantage was taken of his absence; as of absence of Moses to make the golden calf. (7) **evil . . Tobiah,** in thus profaning the temple. (8) **and . . sore,** *etc.*, directly he heard of this abuse he set himself to reform it: as Moses when he came down from the mount. (9) **thither . . God,** *etc.*,[b] restoring the place to its proper use.

*Progress of reform.*—If there were a hundred violins together, all playing below concert pitch, and I should take a real Cremona, and with the hand of a Paganini should bring it strongly up to the true key, and then should sweep my bow across it like a storm, and make it sound forth clear and resonant, what a demoniac jargon would the rest of the playing seem! Yet the other musicians would be enraged at me. They would think all the discord was mine, and I should be to them a demoniac. So it is with reformers. The world thinks the discord is with them, and not in its own false playing.[c]

**Nehemiah reforms the offices of the temple**

*a* Mal. iii. 8.

*b* Nu. xxxv. 2.

*c* vv. 17, 25. Pro. xxviii. 4.

v. 11. *Josh. Toulmin*, 169; *H. Turner*, 82.

"Ministers and people who forsake religion and its services, and magistrates who do not what they can to keep them to it, will have much to answer for hereafter."—*M. Henry.*

*d Dr. Cumming.*

**10, 11.** (10) **portions . . them,**[a] the people withheld their offerings when they saw how things were mismanaged. **fled . . field,**[b] there to obtain their livelihood. (11) **then . . rulers,**[c] the people urged to do their duty through the rulers, who were to set the example. **set . . place,** the posts of duty wh. they had abandoned.

*The forsaken sanctuary.*—I. A sad fact stated. The sanctuary forsaken. 1. Why a sad fact? Those who forsake the sanctuary frequent what places? 2. If lawfully absent from the house of God, then the fact is still sad, for it speaks of illness, etc. II. Inquire into the causes. 1. Of good reasons few, of vain excuses many; 2. Folly of offering as excuses now what will not be listened to by-and-by.

*The love of music.* — Music is universally appreciated and practised. The English ploughboy sings as he drives his team; the Scotch Highlander makes the glens and grey moors resound with his beautiful song; the Swiss, Tyrolese, and Carpathians lighten their labour by music; the muleteer of Spain cares little who is on the throne or behind it, if he can only have his early carol; the vintager of Sicily has his evening hymn, even beside the fire of the burning mount; the fisherman of Naples has his boat-song, to which his rocking boat beats time on that beautiful sea; and the gondolier of Venice still keeps up his midnight serenade.[d]

**tithes paid and treasurers appointed**

*a* x. 38, 39, xii. 44.

*b* vii. 2; 1 Cor. iv. 2.

*c* See *J. Mede, Wks* 177. He shows that it is lawful to do good

**12—14.** (12) **brought . . treasuries,**[a] stored it in the appointed place, for its legitimate use. (13) **treasurers,** storekeepers. **for . . faithful,**[b] they had a good reputation for honesty and impartiality. **office . . brethren,** hence the need of right-minded men. (14) **remember,** *etc.*,[c] Neh. looks to God as his paymaster. He took no reward fr. man.

*Observance of the Sabbath.*—In the year 1809, a youth about seventeen years of age, the son of a respectable tradesman in London, went out for the purpose of shooting birds on a Lord's-day in the afternoon. He had done so more than once before,

which coming to the knowledge of his father, he expressly enjoined him never to do the like again. But the lad, disregarding his command, and taking advantage of his father's absence, borrowed a gun from a person in the neighbourhood, and went out as usual. While he was watching the birds, the gun, by some accident, went off, and killed him on the spot. Not returning at the accustomed time, his friends were alarmed; a search was made, and at length his body was discovered in a barn, in a state too shocking to be described.

**15—18.** (15) **saw . . sabbath,**[a] note the vigilance of the good governor; and his zeal for holy days, as well as places. (16) **Tyre,** *etc.*,[b] if heathen men are willing to *sell*, Israel ought not to be willing to *buy* on the Sabbath. The laxity of the Church may increase the thoughtlessness of the world. (17) **what . . do,** *etc.*, they were responsible in that, being rulers, they permitted it to be done. (18) **did . . thus,** *etc.*,[c] such sin in the past had its punishment. **yet . . sabbath,** not only doing a present wrong, but treating past warnings with thoughtless indifference.

*Treading the grapes in Jerusalem* (*v.* 15).—In peaceful times, the press in which the grapes and olives were trodden was constructed in the vineyard: but in time of war and danger it was removed into the nearest city. This precaution the restored captives were reduced to take for their safety at the time they were visited by Nehemiah. In a state of great weakness themselves, without an efficient government or means of defence, they were exposed to the hostile machinations of numerous and powerful enemies. For this reason, many of the Jews brought their grapes from the vineyards, and trod them in Jerusalem, the only place of safety which the desolated country afforded. "In those days," said Nehemiah, "saw I in Judah, some treading wine-presses on the Sabbath, and bringing in sheaves and laden asses; and also wine, grapes, and figs, and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the Sabbath-day." Had these wine-presses been at a distance from Jerusalem, Nehemiah, who so strictly observed the precept of resting on that day, would not have seen the violation of which he complains.

*Conscientiousness.*—In December, says Mr. Barsoe, the missionary, a pleasing circumstance occurred; it showed the reverence of our Esquimaux for the Lord's-day. Owing to the state of the weather, during the preceding month, but few seals had been taken; and Saturday, the 2nd December, was the first day on which the state of the ice permitted our people to go out on the seal-hunt. Considering the great uncertainty which ever attends this occupation, the inducement to pursue it on the following day, in the hope of securing a better provision for their families, was anything but slight. We were, therefore, not a little pleased to learn that a meeting of fathers of families had been convened on the Saturday evening, and that it had been resolved that they would none of them go out on the ensuing day of the Lord, but would spend it in a manner becoming the disciples of Christ, who were invited thankfully to commemorate His coming into the world to save sinners. They expressed their belief that their heavenly Father was able to grant them, on Monday, a sufficiency for the supply of their wants. The meeting they closed with the singing of some verses, during which they felt the presence and peace of their Lord and Saviour.

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works with a view to a future reward.

*v.* 14. *J. Mede, Wks.* i. 161; *Dr. Mark*, i. 320; *Bp. Dehon*, ii. 304; *J. Jones*, iii. 129.

**the violation of the Sabbath**

[a] Ex. xx. 10.

[b] x. 31.

[c] Jer. xvii. 21–23.

*vv.* 15—18. *J. Venn*, iii. 338; *J. Boyse*, i. 361.

*v.* 17. *E. Nares*, 71; *Bp. O'Beirne*, i. 145.

*vv.* 17, 18. *R. Southgate*, i. 19; *Bp. D. Wilson*, 169.

"He that has energy enough in his constitution to root out a vice should go a little further and try to plant a virtue in its place: otherwise he will have his labour to renew. A strong soil that has produced weeds may be made to produce wheat with far less difficulty than it would cost to make it produce nothing."—*Colton.*

"Reform, like charity, must begin at home. Once well at home, how will it radiate outwards, irrepressible, — into all that we touch and handle, speak and work, —kindling ever new light by inculculable contagion; spreading in geometric ratio, far and wide, doing good only wherever it

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spreads, and not evil."—*Carlyle.*

**Neh. orders the gates to be shut at sunset**

*a* Le. xxiii. 32.

*b* xii. 30.

*c* xiv. 31.

*v.* 22. *J. Jowett*, 239.

"Each year one vicious habit rooted out, in time might make the worst man good."—*Franklin.* The Queen of England is scrupulous in the observance of the Sabbath, not allowing matters of state to encroach upon holy time, not even if presented by the nobility.

"I never knew a man to escape failures in either mind or body, who worked seven days in a week."—*Sir R. Peel.*

**marriages with strange wives**

*a* Ezr. ix. 2.

*b* Ezr. x. 5; Ne. x. 29, 30.

"It must be remembered that Neh. was a person invested with public authority, and that, as such, he was authorised to denounce God's judgments on those who broke His law."—*Wordsworth.*

*c Paxton.*

**Neh. exhorts the people**

*a* 1 Ki. iii. 13; 2

Their confidence in God was not put to shame. On Monday the weather proved so favourable that they captured no fewer than one hundred seals; but in the course of the following night the frost became so intense as to close all the bays and inlets, and to preclude any further attempts to take seals.

**19—22.** (19) **commanded,** *etc.*,[a] took practical steps to prevent this Sabbath market being held. (20) **merchants . . Jerusalem,** their wares spoiling, themselves disappointed. **once or twice,** a few times, till they found out the inconvenience of the new and stringent rule. (21) **then,** *etc.*, he sent messages of warning. Good rulers will do their best to reduce temptations fr. wh. people suffer. (22) **commanded,** *etc.*,[b] having abolished the abuse, he instituted the use of the Sabbath. **remember . . also,**[c] happy is he who at the close of ea. undertaking can pray to be remembered "concerning this also."

*Bishop Porteus on the Sabbath.*—Bishop Porteus, when near death, felt that he could not depart in peace till he had expressed his disapprobation of the profanation of the Lord's-day, so prevalent in his diocese. "I had, for some time past," he says, "observed, in several of the papers, an account of a meeting, chiefly of military gentlemen, at an hotel in the west end of the town, as held every other Sunday during the winter season. I determined that it should not pass without reproof; and thought it best to go at once to the fountain-head, to the person of the principal influence in the meeting, the Prince of Wales." The venerable bishop was wrapped in flannel and carried to Carlton House, where he requested the honour of an audience, and a personal conference with the prince on the subject. He very graciously granted it, and the bishop had a conversation with him of more than half an hour. The prince entered immediately into his views, and confessed that he saw no reasons for holding the meeting on Sunday more than any other day of the week; and he voluntarily proposed, that the day should be changed from Sunday to Saturday, for which he said that he would give immediate orders.

**23—25** (23) **Jews . . Moab,**[a] another mark of declension to be corrected. Passion outweighing religion. (24) **children,** *etc.*, illus. of effect of ill-assorted marriages. (25) **cursed,** as one in authority he denounced the Divine judgments upon them. **smote,** *etc.*, ordered them to be scourged. **made . . God,**[b] took an oath of them to abstain fr. this evil.

*Plucking off the hair.*—In Judæa, the punishment of infamy consisted chiefly in cutting off the hair of evil-doers: yet it is thought that pain was added to disgrace, and that they tore off the hair with violence, as if they were plucking a bird alive. This is the genuine signification of the Hebrew word used by Nehemiah in describing his conduct towards those Jews who had violated the law by taking strange wives: "And I contended with them, and smote certain of them, and *plucked off* their hair." This kind of punishment was common in Persia. King Artaxerxes, instead of plucking off the hair of such of his generals as had been guilty of a fault, obliged them to lay aside the tiara. The Emperor Domitian caused the hair and beard of the philosopher Apollonius to be shaved.[c]

**26—28.** (26) **did . . things?** 1 K. xi. 1, *ff.* **yet . . him,**[a] hence he should have been the more carful of his example.

**nevertheless . . sin,**[b] notwithstanding his wisdom, and religious profession. (27) **shall,** *etc.*,[c] as if you could resist the evil influences of this connection, or escape the just wrath of God. (28) **Joiada,** prob. his name was Manasseh.[d] **therefore . . me,** expelled him fr. his office, and personal friendship.

*Jedediah.*—I. The objects of God's special regard. 1. They are often the children of His servants—like Solomon; 2. They are ever the subjects of special grace—as Solomon; 3. They are always faulty and erring—as Solomon; 4. They are seldom such backsliders as Solomon. II. The reason of God's special regard. They who are thus loved are generally characterised by great devotion to His cause, great delight in His name. But the reason why He loves them is only answered by referring to Jesus. It was not the riches, wisdom, zeal, or the success of Solomon, for all these things were bestowed because he was loved. III. The tokens of God's special regard. 1. An experimental knowledge of His love; 2. A passionate, ardent return of His love; 3. Success in labours; 4. Chastisement.

*A faithful reproof.*—It is said that Henry the Great of France took much pleasure in conversing with an honest and religious man of a low situation in life, who used great freedom with his majesty. One day he said to the king, "Sire, I always take your part when I hear any man speaking evil of you: I know that you excel in justice and generosity, and that many worthy things have been done by you. But you have one vice for which God will condemn you if you do not repent. I mean the unlawful love of women." The king, it is said, was too magnanimous to resent this reproof, but he long felt it like an arrow in his bosom; and sometimes said that the most eloquent discourses of the doctors of the Sorbonne had never made such an impression on his soul as this honest reproof from his humble friend.

**29—31.** (29) **remember . . God,** "convince and convert them."[a] But this can hardly be the idea, for he does not add 'for good." **because,** *etc.*, Neh. seems to sug. that they deserve condign punishment. (30) **thus,** *etc.*,[b] in the manner hereinbef. descr. (31) **remember . . good,** God will certainly "remember," us all. Can ea. reader hope he will be remembered "for good?"

*Summary of the character of Nehemiah.*—There are many things which men may observe in him for their special direction, and because he desires God to remember them, we likewise will consider what use they will be to us. I. Observe his care of foreign and remote intelligence. II. His extraordinary love, zeal, and tender-heartedness towards his country. III. His not being contented with his own honour and greatness, while his own brethren were in affliction. IV. His prudent vigilancy. V. His pious courage. VI. His wise discovery of adverse counsels and preparation. VII. His special care upon all emergent occasions to call the people together for new and further counsels. VIII. His indefatigable labour night and day, being not only a commander, but an example of unwearied patience to all the people. IX. His compassionate zeal, mixed with wisdom, impartiality, and self-denial, for the poor which were oppressed. X. His bounty to the work. XI. His undiscouraged constancy. XII. His wise and pious care to communicate part of the charge to faithful coadjutors. XIII. His singular zeal for the purity of God's

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Ch. i. 12; 2 S. xii. 24.

*b* 1 Ki. xi. 4, *ff.*

*c* Ezr. x. 2.

*d* *Jos. Ant.* xi. 8. 3. But see *Prideaux* on B.C. 410, and *Dr. W. Smith, Old Test. Hist.* 552; and *Bertheau*, 272.

*v.* 26. *J. Williams, Char. of Old Test.* 210.

"Our appetites of one or another kind are excellent spurs to our reason, which otherwise might feebly set about the great ends of preserving and continuing the species."—*C. Lamb.*

"These appetites are very humiliating weaknesse. That our grace depends so largely upon animal condition is not quite flattering to those who are hyperspiritual."—*Beecher*

**Neh. prays that he may be remembered for good**

*a* *Wordsworth.*

*b* x. 30, xii. 1, *ff.*

"The ending of this Bk. may at first seem rather abrupt; and, since the date of the Bk. of Esther is prior to that of Neh., the last words of Neh. are the last words of Bibl cal hist."—*Wordsworth.*

*v.* 31. *Bp. Reynolds, Wks.* v. 9; *Dr. H. Mill*, 347.

"We commend a horse for his strength and sureness of foot, and not for his rich caparisons; a greyhound for

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his share of heels, not for his fine collar; a hawk for her wing, not for her jesses and bells. Why, in like manner, do we not value a man for what is properly his own? He has a great train, a beautiful palace, so much credit, so many thousand pounds a year, and all these are about him, but not in him."—*Montaigne.*

*c Bp. Reynolds.*

*d Bp. Reynolds.*

"Much precious fruit falls into our laps before we by prayer shake the tree. Now, if the water of life do flow in such streams upon us when we pray not, how pleasantly will they flow when they are drawn by the attractive power of prayer! If the Lord is found when we seek not, opens when we knock not, answers when we call not; how much more will He open and answer when we knock and call! If the greatest blessing be vouchsafed before we have hearts to pray, how confident may we be that prayer will obtain the less!"—*Clarkson.*

*e Increase and Mather.*

people. XIV. His special wisdom and care to heal the sinful breaches and divisions among the people.[c]

*Nehemiah.*—Though all saints have all the members of the new man, and all the graces of Christ fashioned in them—for there are no monsters in His body—yet, as in the natural body, some excel in sight or hearing, or strength, or swiftness, or beauty; so in the mind, one excelleth in one grace, another in another, according as the Spirit is pleased diversely to distribute His gifts unto men. Abraham is renowned for faith, Isaac for meditation, Jacob for plainness, Joseph for chastity, Job for patience, Solomon for wisdom, Moses for meekness, Phinehas for zeal, David for devotion, Mary for love, Nathaniel for singleness. And as some are more eminent than others for special graces, so likewise in special services. Joshua for a warrior, Hushai for a counsellor, Solomon for a governor, Paul for a preacher; and in this book Nehemiah for a wise and a valiant manager of great and honourable actions. I would send a worldling to read Ecclesiastes, to learn the vanity of the creature; a lover of Christ to Solomon's Canticles; a devout person to David's Psalms; an afflicted person to Job's temptations; a preacher to Timothy and Titus; a blackslider in faith to the Hebrews; a moralist to the Proverbs; a justiciary and legalist to the Romans and Galatians; a libertine to James, Peter, and Jude; a soldier to Joshua and Judges; a man that would study God's providence to Esther; and those who go about great undertakings to this Book of Nehemiah.[d]

*Power of prayer.*—Hiacoomes was the first Christian preacher on Martha's vineyard; for a biography of whom the reader is referred to Increase Mayhew's account of the praying Indians, 1726. The following is related of him: "One Lord's-day after meeting, where Hiacoomes had been preaching, there came in a Powwaw very angry and said, 'I know all the meeting Indians are liars. You say you don't care for the Powwaws,' then calling two or three of them by name, he railed at them, and told them they were deceived, for the Powwaws could kill all the meeting Indians, if they set about it. But Hiacoomes told him that he would be in the midst of all the Powwaws in the island, and they should do the utmost they could against him; and when they should do their worst by their witchcraft to kill him, he would without fear set himself against them by remembering Jehovah. He told them also he did put all the Powwaws under his heel. Such was the faith of this good man. Nor were these Powwaws ever able to do these Christian Indians any hurt, though others were frequently hurt and killed by them.[e]—*Importunity in prayer.*—The Rev. Philip Henry, having prayed very earnestly for two of his children that were dangerously ill, said: "If the Lord will be pleased to grant me this my request concerning my children, I will not say as the beggars at our door used to do, 'I'll never ask anything of Him again;' but, on the contrary, He shall hear oftener from me than ever; and I will love God the better, and love prayer the better as long as I live."

# THE BOOK OF ESTHER.

# Introduction.

I. **Title.** Taken fr. name of the person whose hist. it records, called by the Jews *Megil lah Esther*, = the vol. of Esther. II. **Author.** Opinions much divided. Some (*Augustine*, etc.) say Ezra: others ascribe it to the joint labours of the Gt. Synagogue: while *Philo* assigns it to Joachin, S. of Joshua, H. priest, who returned with Zerubbabel: and others think it was written by Mordecai, and found their view on ix. 20—23. Prob. it is a translated extract fr. a Persian record of the time: hence (1) absence of name of God; (2) use of Persian word *Purim;* (3) minute acquaintance with details of Pers. Empire, and names of officials; (4) designation of Esther as "the queen;" (5) and of Mordecai as "the Jew." III. **Canonicity.** This has never been doubted. The Feast of Purim, observed to present time, is proof of reality of events recorded. It may be placed betw. vi. and vii. caps. of Ezra. In our copies the bk. ends with *v.* 3 of cap. x: but in Gk. and Vulg. there are ten verses more, together with six more chapters wh. the Gk. and Lat. Churches regard as canonical. These are supposed to have been compiled by some Hellenistic Jew, and as they are not extant in Hebrew, they are expunged fr. the sac. canon by Protestants. IV. **Purpose.** It shows how the Jews, scattered among the heathen, were preserved, though doomed to destruction. "Though the *name* of God is not found in the bk., His hand is plainly seen, *anticipating* threatened evil, *defeating* and *overruling* it to the greater good of the Jews, and even of the heathen. The Jews in Babylon were not alone in peril. Had Haman succeeded, the Jews throughout the world must have perished, and with them the whole visible Ch. of God, since the power of Persia was then supreme at Jerusalem, and throughout Asia.

# Synopsis.

(*According to Horne.*)


**PART I.—The promotion of Esther; and the essential service rendered to the king by Mordecai, in detecting a plot against his life** ...i., ii.

**PART II.—The advancement of Haman; his designs against the Jews, and their frustration.**

*Sect.* 1. Promotion of Haman, decree for destroying the Jews .....iii.

*Sect.* 2. Affliction of Jews, and measures they pursued .....iv.

*Sect.* 3. Defeat of Haman's plot against Mordecai .....v., vi., vii.

*Sect.* 4. Defeat of Haman's plot against the Jews.....viii, ix. 1—16

*Sect.* 5. Institution of feast of Purim .....ix. 17—32

Advancement of Mordecai .....x.

## CHAPTER THE FIRST.

B.C. 521.

**the feast of Ahasuerus to the princes**

**1–4.** (1) **Ahasuerus,** the well-known Xerxes who figures in Grecian hist. This name—Ahas.—was an official title of kings of Persia.[a] (2) **Shushan,** Susa.[b] (3) **third . . feast,** *etc.*, in this yr. Xerxes was preparing for his Grecian expedition.[c] (4) **when,** *etc.*, Persian custom to unite great councils with great festivities.

*The feast of Ahasuerus.*—The duration of the feast recorded in the above passage is, however, very extraordinary. It continued for half a year, as the Persian year consisted of 360 days. There are few examples of any festivals of such long duration. The apocryphal book of Judith records that Nabuchodonosor the Assyrian, after his victory over Arphaxad, banqueted all his army, comprising a multitude of men out of various nations for 120 days at Nineveh. The most remarkable parallel instance of protracted and abundant feasting is that of a Gaul named Ariamnes, who undertook to feast all the Gaulish nation, for an entire year. And he performed his promise; for he caused tents, each capable of containing 300 men, to be pitched at regular distances on all the principal roads, keeping in each of them boilers furnished with all kinds of meats in abundance, as well as vessels full of wine, and a great number of attendants to wait upon the guests, and supply all their wants.[d]—*Evils of gluttony.*—It is no slight argument of the dishonour we incur by gluttony, that nothing is more carefully avoided in a well-bred company. Nothing would be thought by such more brutal and rude than the discovery of any marks of having eaten intemperately,—of having exceeded that proportion of food which is requisite for our nourishment. The influence that our food has upon our health, its tendency to preserve or impair our constitution, is the measure of its temperance or excess. He is alone temperate who eats not to gratify his taste but to preserve his life; who is the same at every table as his own; who when he feasts is not cloyed, and sees all the delicacies before him that luxury can accumulate, yet preserves a due abstinence in the midst of them. To govern our appetite is necessary; but there is no necessity that we should always mortify it. Life is no more to be passed in constant self-denial than in a round of sensual enjoyments. We should endeavour that it may not be, at any time, painful to us to deny ourselves what is improper for us; and, on that as well as other accounts, is it most fitting that we should frequently practise self-denial—that we should often forego what would delight us. But to do this continually cannot be required of us, because it is not reasonable to think that it should be our duty wholly to debar ourselves of that food which our palate is formed to relish, and which may be used without any prejudice to our virtue or our health. Experience proves that nothing contributes more to the preservation of life than temperance; and they who describe the golden age, or the age of innocence, and near a thousand years of life, represent the customary food of it as the plainest and most simple. The dissuasives from eating intemperately, that appear of the greatest weight, are these: It is the grossest abuse of the

*a* Ezr. iv. 6. like Czar, Pharaoh, etc., India.—the country on banks of the Indus, called Hindu, whence Hindustan, *i.e.* land of the Hindoos, as Afghanistan = land of Afghans, etc.

*b* Neh. i. 1. *Herodotus* (vii. 6. 135, 136, ix. 107) speaks of it as residence of Xerxes; see also *Æschylus Pers.* 15, 124, 563

*c Diodorus Siculus*, xi. 2.

*v.* 3. *J. C. Dieteric, Antiq.* 385.

*d Dr. Kitto.*

"Sobriety is that virtue which keeps a *medium* in the pleasures that arise from eating and drinking, with respect both to the quantity and quality thereof." — *Limborch.*

"As houses well stored with provisions are likely to be full of mice; so the bodies of those that eat much are full of diseases." —*Diogenes.*

"Such whose sole bliss is eating, who can give but that one brutal reason why they live."—*Juvenal.*

"Some men are born to feast, and not to fight; whose sluggish minds, e'en in fair honour's field, still on

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gifts of Providence. It is the vilest debasement of ourselves. Our bodies owe to it the most painful diseases, and generally a speedy decay. It frequently interrupts the use of our nobler faculties, and is certain, at length, greatly to enfeeble them. The straits to which it often reduces us, occasion our falling into crimes which would otherwise have been our utter abhorrence.[e]

**5—9.** (5) **garden**, park, paradise. (6) **hangings**, curtains of marquees, or pavilions. **beds**, couches, divans. (7) **in .. gold**, hence profusion of the precious metal.[a] **royal wine**, *lit.* wine of the kingdom; prob. Chalybonian.[b] (8) **compel**, to begin, or refrain.[c] (9) **queen**, the supreme queen.[d]

*Gold and silver beds.*—These beds of gold and silver may receive illustration from modern Asiatic furniture; the divan, or hall of audience, as also the room for receiving guests in private houses, is generally covered with a Persian carpet, round which are placed cushions of different shape and size, in cases of gold and silver rincob, or of scarlet cloth embroidered; these are occasionally moved into courts and gardens, and placed under the *shahnyanah* for the accommodation of company.[e]

*The marble pavement.*—Dr. Russel does not represent the pavement of the courts as all mosaic work, and equally adorned, but he tells us that it is usually that part that lies between the fountain and the arched alcove on the south side that is thus beautified, supposing that there is but one alcove in a court; however, it should seem in some other parts of the East there are several of these alcoves opening into the court. Maundrell, who calls them duans, in his account of the houses of Damascus, says expressly, that they have generally several on all sides of the court, "being placed at such different points, that at one or other of them you may always have either the shade or the sun, which you please." Are not these alcoves, or duans, of which, according to this, there might be several in the court of the palace of Ahasuerus, what the sacred writer means by the beds adorned with silver and gold? (Esth. i. 6.) I shall elsewhere show that the bed where Esther was sitting, and on which Haman threw himself, must more resemble the modern Oriental duans, or divans, than the beds on which the Romans reclined at their entertainments; and, consequently, it is more natural to understand those beds of these alcoves, or duans, richly adorned with gold and silver, while on the lower variegated pavements, carpets were also laid, for the reception of those that could not find a place in these duans; on which pavements, Dr. Shaw tells us, they are wont, in Barbary, when much company is to be entertained, to strew mats and carpets.[f]

**10—12.** (10) **Mehuman**, *etc.*, writer of this bk. minutely acquainted with palace affairs. (11) **Vashti . . beauty**, her name = beautiful woman. (12) **refused**,[a] her modesty and rank forbade that she should make a spectacle of herself to gratify a crowd of drunken and licentious revellers. **wroth**, this was like that Xerxes who flogged the sea for destroying his bridge of boats.

*The deposition of Vashti.*—In this scene we have sundry persons to contemplate. I. The first person who rivets attention is the king, Ahasuerus. In him we observe—1. The loss of self respect; 2. Disregard of the rights of others; 3. Loss of self-control. II. Let us now consider the noble queen, whose

**their dinner turn."** — *Joanna Baillie.*

*e Dean Bolton.*

**the feast made to people**

*a Æschylus* (*Pers.* 3) applies the epithet *Polùchrusos* to Susa.

*b* Ezek. xxvii. 18; *Strabo*, xv. 330.

*c* National habits of princes of provinces respected; some of the mountain tribes famous for their temperance. See *Xenophon, Cyrop.* i. 2, 16.

*d* Often possessed of great influence; as Atossa, Queen of Darius, the mo. of Xerxes. *Herodotus*, ii. 134, vii. 7; *Æschylus, Pers.* 158—160.

*vv.* 7—9. *J. C. Dieteric, Antiq.* 336.

*e Forbes's Oriental Memoirs.*

"Honour's a thing too subtle for his wisdom; if honour lie in eating, he's right honourable." — *Beaumont and Fletcher.*

*f Harmer.*

**Vashti is summoned, and refuses to obey**

*a* See *Herodotus*, v. 18.

*v.* 12. *H. Hughes, Fem. Char.* Vashti, ii. 497.

"Men cannot labour on always. They must have intervals of relaxation. They cannot sleep

feelings, position, and relations, he had so grossly outraged. III. Glance at some other persons in this history-lesson. The whole was intended to show—1. What were the circumstances against which Providence was making provision; 2. To remind us that this God is the same for ever.

*Historical parallel.*—Every classical reader will remember the parallel story of the imprudence of Candaules. Candaules, king of Lydia, whose wife was remarkable for personal attractions, promised in a fit of intoxication to "show her beauty" to his favourite, Gyges. This promise he performed by introducing him into the queen's apartment, according to the mythologists, by the use of a ring, which rendered the wearer invisible. The outraged queen, disgusted at the brutal drunkenness of her consort, with a significant look and gesture placed a dagger in the hand of Gyges, who instantly slew the king, and, afterwards marrying his widow, obtained the throne of Lydia.—*The queen's feast.*—The women are not permitted to associate with the other sex at an Eastern banquet; but they are allowed to entertain one another in their own apartments. When Ahasuerus, the king of Persia, treated all the people of his capital with a splendid feast, Vashti, the queen, we are informed, "made a banquet for the women in the royal house, which belonged to King Ahasuerus." This, observes Chardin, is the custom of all the East; the women have their feasts at the same time, but apart from the men. And Maillet informs us, in his letters, that the same custom is observed in Egypt. This is undoubtedly the reason that the prophet distinctly mentions "the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride;" he means that the noise of nuptial mirth was heard in different apartments. The personal voices of the newly-married pair cannot be understood, but the noisy mirth which a marriage feast commonly excites; for in Syria, and probably in all the surrounding countries, the bride is condemned to absolute silence, and fixed by remorseless etiquette to the spot where she has been seated. When the banquet was finished, and the guests had removed, the poor came in and ate up the fragments, so that nothing was lost. This custom will account for the command to the servants, in the parable of the supper, "Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled." These poor and destitute persons were called to the entertainment only before the time when, according to the custom of the country, they were expected to attend.[b]

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through these intervals. What are they to do? Why, if they do not work or sleep, they must have relaxation, and if they have not relaxation from healthy sources, they will be very likely to take it from the poisoned fountains of intemperance. Or if they have pleasures which, though innocent, are forbidden by the maxims of public morality, their very pleasures are likely to become poisoned fountains."—*Orville Dewey.*

"Who hath not proved how feebly words essay to fix one spark of beauty's heavenly ray? Who doth not feel, until his failing sight faints into dimness with its own delight, his changing cheek, his sinking heart confess the might, the majesty of loveliness?"—*Byron.*

"Beauty is worse than wine, it intoxicates both the holder and the beholder."—*Zimmerman.*

*b Parton.*

**13–15.** (13) **which . . times,** knew the laws, what custom required. (14) **seven . . Media,** Ezr. vii. 14. **which . . face,** his privy council, his cabinet ministers. (15) **what . . law,** a momentous question for these great lords. Something must be done, but it must be according to law. According to what law, beyond their own muddled wills, was it that the Q. had been summoned?

**the king consults with his ministers**

*The beauty of Vashti.*—The Persians, on festival occasions, used to produce their women in public. To this purpose Herodotus relates a story of seven Persians being sent to Amyntas, a Grecian

"An Indian philosopher being asked what were according to his opinion the two most beautiful things in the universe, answered, the starry hea-

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vens above our head, and the feeling of duty in our hearts."—*Bossuet.*

"Beauty is the frail and weary weed in which God dresses the soul which He has called into time."—*Michael Angelo.*

*a Burder.*

*b Roberts.*

prince, who received them hospitably, and gave them a splendid entertainment. When, after the entertainment, they began to drink, one of the Persians thus addressed Amyntas: "Prince of Macedonia, it is a custom with us Persians, whenever we have a public entertainment, to introduce our concubines and young wives." On this principle Ahasuerus gave command to bring his queen Vashti into the public assembly.[a]—*The queen's refusal.*—When a person is speaking to you, on almost any subject, he keeps saying every moment, "Be not angry, my lord:" or, "Let not your anger burn." Judah said to Joseph, "Let not thine anger burn." "Go not near that man; his anger is on fire." "Well, well, what is the matter with that fellow?" "Not much; some one has put the torch to his anger." "Go, throw some water on that fire, or it will not soon be out."[b]

**Memucan condemns the conduct of Vashti**

*a* Ep. v. 33.

"Where the mouth is sweet and the eyes intelligent, there is always the look of beauty, with a right heart."—*Leigh Hunt.*

"What tender force, what dignity divine, what virtue consecrating every feature; around that neck what dross are gold and pearls!"—*Young.*

"All orators are dumb when beauty pleadeth."—*Shakespeare.*

**16—18.** (16) **Memucan,** last named in *v.* 14; prob. he is now bidding for office. (17) **so . . eyes,**[a] as many of them consciously deserved to be. A hint here of the position of woman at that time and place. (18) **ladies,** wives. **say,** they would not be slow to twit their husbands. **contempt,** in the women. **wrath,** in the men.

*Position of woman in the East.*—The true position of the female sex is still so little understood in the East, and even among the Asiatic Hebrews so little regarded, that the following expression forms part of the daily prayer of the Oriental Jew:—"Lord of the world, I thank Thee that Thou hast not made me a woman."

*Esther dramatised.*—When Racine composed the tragedy of *Esther*, to please Madame Maintenon, she very strongly recommended it at court, and every one was charmed with the performance except an honest curate, who refused to see it. Being very urgently pressed for his reasons, he told Madame M. that she knew he was in the habit of publicly reprobating the stage from the pulpit, and that though the tragedy of *Esther* was far different from the generality of plays, yet it was still known to be a play; adding, that were he to yield to the request, his hearers would compare his conduct with his sermons, and, in their practice, would pursue the course most suited to their sinful inclinations.

**at his advice the king deposes Vashti**

*a* viii. 8; Da. vi. 8, 12, 15.

*b* viii. 9.

*c* Ep. v. 22—24; 1 Ti. ii. 12.

*d Heb.* that one should publish it according to the language of his people.

"Beauty of form affects the mind, but then it must be understood that it is not the mere shell that

**19—22.** (19) **laws . . altered,**[a] for if altered, the Q. with regained power might punish those who degraded her. **royal estate,** position, title, portion. **unto . . she,** as they hoped more subservient. (20) **wives . . honour,** whether they were worthy of it or no. (21) **saying . . princes,** they could contrive nothing better. (22) **writing,**[b] character employed in writing; a peculiar dialect. They would have it made clear to all. **man . . house,**[c] and be lord and master there. **that . . people,**[d] the sense is that a husband should use the language of his people, and constrain his wives—even though foreigners—to do the same.

*Inconsistency in the family.*—I have been in his family, said Christian of Talkative, and have observed him both at home and abroad; and I know what I say of him is the truth. His house is as empty of religion as the white of an egg is of savour. There is neither prayer nor sign of repentance for sin; yea, the brute in his kind serves God far better than he. He is the very stain, reproach, and shame of religion to all that know him; it

can hardly have a good word in all that end of the town where he dwells through him. Thus say the common people of him: "A saint abroad, and a devil at home." His poor family find it so. He is such a churl; such a railer at, and so unreasonable with, his servants that they neither know how to do for or to speak to him. Men that have any dealings with him say it is better to deal with a Turk than with him, for fairer dealings they shall have at his hands. This Talkative, if it be possible, will go beyond them, defraud, beguile, and overreach them. Besides, he brings up his sons to follow his steps; and if he finds in any of them a "foolish timorousness" (for so he calls the first appearance of tender conscience) he calls them fools and blockheads, and by no means will employ them in much, or speak to their commendation before others. For my part, I am of opinion that he has by his wicked life caused many to stumble and fall; and will be, if God prevents not, the ruin of many more.[e]

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we admire; we are attracted by the idea that this shell is only a beautiful case adjusted to shape and value of a still more beautiful pearl within. The perfection of outward loveliness is a soul shining through its crystalline covering." —*Jane Porter.*

[e] *Bunyan.*

## *CHAPTER THE SECOND.*

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**a successor to Vashti is to be sought**

**1—4.** (1) **after . . things,** Vashti was deposed in begin. of 3rd yr. of his reign: and Esther succeeded her in 10th month of 7th yr.[a] (2) **said . . him,** perh. at his instigation: perh. these vile panderers desired to divert his mind after his defeats in Greece, and unsuccessful intrigues. (3) **gather . . virgins,** vivid picture of the degradation of woman in Persia. **purification,** baths, perfumes, etc. (4) **thing . . so,** what a king to be so pleased!

*The palace and city of Shushan.*—For many ages known only by the records of its greatness in sacred and profane history, the site of the palace and city of Shushan (Est. iii. 15) has been veiled in obscurity. Fatal alike to art and prosperity, the Mohammedan conquest of Asia brought it for a short period into notice, but the more completely to entomb it beneath the ravages of warfare, superstition, and neglect. And it is only since the enterprising explorations of Colonel Williams, in 1849—1852, that the true position of the ancient capital of Persia has been ascertained, and proved to be buried under the three great mounds on the eastern side of the river Shâour, which are to this day called by the Arabs the Mounds of El Shush. Extending over an area of twelve miles in circumference, and the three principal ridges varying from forty to seventy feet in elevation, these desolate tumuli, covered with tall rigid grasses, straggling acacias, and rampant weeds, present, even to the scrutiny of an experienced eye, little indication of the fallen city which they inearth, and the beauty which their name perpetuates.

[a] "The interval was filled up with the Grecian campaign and various intrigues. see *Herodotus*, vii. viii., ix. "The youth who follows his appetites too soon seizes the cup before it has received its best ingredients, and by anticipating his pleasures, robs the remaining part of life of their share, so that his eagerness only produces a maturity of imbecility and an age of pain." —*Goldsmith.*

**Mordecai and Esther**

**5—7.** (5) **now . . Jew,** certain Jews were oft. found in palaces of heathen kings.[a] (6) **who,** *i.e.* Kish. **carried . . Jeconiah,**[b] ab. 117 yrs. bef (7) **Hadassah,** *Heb.* for myrtle. **Esther,** Pers. for star.[c] **uncle's,**[d] by her father Abihail. **maid . . beautiful,** *Heb.* fair of form and good of countenance. **took . . daughter** not thinking what was in store for his beautiful orphan cousin or niece.

*Of the myrtle that became a star.*—I. Let us speak of Hadassah the orphan. Hadassah means myrtle, and Mordecai took the little tree growing without shelter from the storms, and he took

[a] Joseph, Moses, Daniel, Nehemiah.

[b] *Davison*, 157—159.

[c] "Her maiden name was Myrtle, her name as queen was Star." —*Bertheau.*

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it and planted it by his own hearth. II. Let us now look at Hadassah the captive. III. At Hadassah the beautiful maiden. Nobody should despise beauty of face. Bad character spoils beauty. Beauty of soul makes up for want of beauty where it is not. IV. Esther the queen. Let us part with a wish. May you grow like a myrtle, and glow like a star.[e]

*A twofold wish.*—I. May you grow like a myrtle. Two qualities it has that I would like you to resemble. It is ever green. It cheers the winter as well as the summer. So be ye kind and lovely in the dark days as well as bright, in adversity as in prosperity, and the first time you see a myrtle, press one of its leaves with your thumb and finger, and scent its sweet fragrance. Then think—so let me be giving out a sweet savour of godliness, and making the house I live in as pleasant as if some perfume were filling the air. II. May you glow like a star. What makes the star shine? God clothed it with light. So walk you in light—Christ's light—the light of truth, and love, and holiness. Where shines the star? Up above the world so high, etc. There the star shines; it has its home in heaven. There at last may you shine. There be your home for ever.[f]—*Use and abuse of the beautiful.*—I thought in France that the French people were the most interesting people in the world, till I had stayed among them a week or two, when I began to feel, "They are just like a dewdrop, that is exquisitely beautiful, but that I can never draw a bucket of water from." And when I got back to England, I said of the people there, "They are rough, but there is something enduring in them." The French develop the beautiful in the direction of the physical and material, and the English in the direction of the intellectual and the moral. Each is partial in its development of this quality. The ecclesiologist cultivates beauty in church worship. He makes the house of God beautiful; he makes the singing beautiful; he makes the vocalisation beautiful; he makes everything belonging to the services of the sanctuary beautiful. And I do not object to that. Right over against him is a Friend Quaker, who says, "Outward beauty is a bait of the devil, to ensnare men withal. I believe in the sweet and sublime stillness of the soul before God. That is beautiful. Give me plainness." Here is one that goes to excess in all external beauty; and here is another that goes to excess of beauty in spiritual things. My doctrine is this: that the element of the beautiful should be developed in everything harmoniously—in dress, in the household, in society, in thoughts, in feelings, in worship, in pleasure, and with the natural restraints and counterbalances that beauty requires to protect it against pride and selfishness. The safety of the element of the beautiful requires that it should have its own interior counterbalances and restraints. It is not the beautiful in too great a measure that leads to excess of mischief and selfishness. It is because it is cultivated but partially, or only on one side of the mind, that it produces mischiefs.[g]

**8—11.** (8) **Esther . . house,** her beauty seems to have been reported to Hegai. The myrtle was transplanted to a palace. (9) **maiden . . him,** Hegai, and so had the advantage of special attention. Hegai may have been kind for his own sake, as seeing her prob. exaltation. (10) **Esther . . kindred,** *etc.*, this had been concealed, probably, for Esther's sake. What, else, had been

**Esther finds favour with Hegai, the keeper of the women**

*d* Acc. to *Josephus* (*Ant.* x. 6, 2) Mordecai was himself her uncle.

*e Dr. Edmonds.* "In the true mythology, love is an immortal child, and beauty leads him as a guide; nor can we express a deeper sense than when we say beauty is the pilot of the young soul." — *Emerson*

"Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale her infinite variety; other women cloy the appetites they feed; but she makes hungry where most she satisfies." — *Shakespeare.*

"The repose of beauty, where she lieth bright and still as some lone angel, dead asleep in light on the most heavenward top of all this world, wing-weary." — *Dobell.*

*f Dr Edmonds.* "After all, the most natural beauty in the world is honesty and moral truth. For all beauty is truth. True features make the beauty of a face; and true proportions the beauty of architecture; as true measures that of harmony and music. In poetry, which is all fable, truth still is the perfection." — *Shaftesbury.*

*g H. W. Beecher.*

the fate of the Heb. orphan among that licentious people! (11) Mordecai, *etc.*, there gathering up such scraps of palace gossip as might relate to his beautiful kinswoman.

*A Turkish harem.*—After these presents followed eleven caroches (coaches) full of young maidens, slaues to serue the bride: these caroches were couered and shut, and either of them attended by eunuchs, Moores: after these followed twenty-eight virgin slaues, attired in cloth of gold, and accompanied by twenty-eight blacke eunuchs all on horsebacke, and richly clad. After which were seen two hundred and forty mules, loaden with tents of tapestries, cloath of gold, sattin, veluet, with the ground of gold, with many cushions, which are the chaires the ladies of Turkie use, with many other rich and sumptuous moueables.[b]

**12—14.** (12) **after . . months,** a long preparation; perh. required by state etiquette. A hint, too, of the number of maidens thus collected. (13) **whatsoever . . house,** whatsoever of ornaments, dress, perfumes, etc. (14) **came . . more,** *etc.*, but remained immured in the harem.

*The women's apartments in the East.*—The apartments of the women are counted sacred and inviolable over all the East; it is even a crime to inquire what passes within the walls of the harem, or house of the women. Hence, it is extremely difficult to be informed of the transactions in those sequestered habitations; and a man, says Chardin, may walk a hundred days, one after another, by the house where the women are, and yet know no more what is done there than at the farther end of Tartary. This sufficiently explains the reason of Mordecai's conduct, who "walked every day before the court of the women's house, to know how Esther did, and what should become of her."[a]

**15—17.** (15) **required . . appointed,** his appointments had been so profuse, or her modesty was so great, or her faith in God was such, that she would not depend on extra aids. (16) **Tebeth,** fr. new moon in Jan., to that in Feb. **seventh . . reign,** ab. B.C. 479-8. (17) **women,** wives. **favour,** kindness. **made . . Vashti,** so the myrtle that bloomed in the Heb. cottage became a star to shine in the Pers. palace.

*The elevation of Esther.*—Note some of the wayside lessons of this history. I. The reflections of the king are not without instruction. 1. His tone of mind; 2. The subject of his reflections. II. Not less instructive the counsels of his ministers. 1. They could lead him to sin, but could not guide him to repentance; 2. They would steep his senses in forgetfulness, by leading him further on in vice. III. Note the circumstances that led to the exaltation of Esther. 1. The position of Mordecai and his niece; 2. The appropriation of Esther; 3. Her beauty shows what fleeting things some owe their advancement to. IV. The enthroning of Esther furnishes the opportunity for the occurrence of those incidents which advance the Divine plan. 1. The elevation of Mordecai; 2. His discovery of the plot.

*True beauty.*—A gentleman had two children: one a daughter, who was considered plain in her person; the other a son, who was reckoned handsome. One day, as they were playing together, they saw their faces in a looking-glass. The boy was charmed with his beauty, and spoke of it to his sister, who considered his remarks as so many reflections on her want of it. She told her father of the affair, complaining of her brother's rudeness to her.

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noblest power of woman, and is far fitter to prevail by parley than by battle."—*Sir P. Sidney.*

*a* v. 20. "Could beauty have better commerce than with honesty?"—*Shakespeare.*

*b Knolles's Hist. of the Turks.*

**the manner of purification, and going to the king**

"A beautiful woman is the hell of the soul, the purgatory of the purse, and the paradise of the eyes."—*Fontinelle.*

"Beauty, the fringe of the garment of the Lord."—*Bailey.*

*a Paxton.*

**Esther is preferred by the king**

"Adorning thee with so much art is but a barbarous skill."—*Cowley*

"Beautiful as sweet! and young as beautiful! and soft as young! and gay as soft! and innocent as gay!"—*Young.*

"A lady so richly clad as she—beautiful exceedingly."—*Coleridge.*

"Beauty stands in the admiration only of weak minds led captive."—*Milton.*

*v.* 17. *H. Hughes, Fem. Char.* "Esther," ii. 547.

"Beauty is as summer fruits, which are easy to corrupt and cannot last; and for the most part

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it makes a disso-lute youth, and an age a little out of countenance; but if it light well, it makes virtues shine and vice blush."—*Bacon.*

According to mythology, Medusa was a maiden of such rare beauty as to provoke the goddess Minerva to jealousy; and on this account she was transformed into a frightful monster. Her admired ringlets became hissing serpents, and no living thing could look upon her without being turned into stone. All around the cavern where she dwelt might be seen the stony figures of men and animals who had chanced to catch a glimpse of her, and had been petrified with the sight. *a Lisle.*

The father, instead of appearing angry, took them both on his knees, and with much affection gave them the following advice: "I would have you both look in the glass every day; you, my son, that you may be reminded never to dishonour the beauty of your face by the deformity of your actions: and you, my daughter, that you may take care to hide the defect of beauty in your person by the superior lustre of your virtuous and amiable conduct."

*Charms of beauty.*—

Array'd in all her charms, appear'd the fair;
Tall was her stature, unconfined her air;
Proportion deck'd her limbs, and in her face
Lay love enshrined, lay sweet attractive grace,
Temp'ring the awful beams her eyes convey'd,
And, like a lambent flame, around her play'd.
No foreign aids by ladies mortal worn,
From shells and rocks her artless charms adorn;
For, grant that beauty were by gems increased,
'Tis rendered more suspected at the least,
And foul defects, that would escape the sight,
Start from the piece, and take a stronger light.
Her chestnut hair, in careless ringlets, round
Her temples wav'd, with pinks and jasmine crown'd,
And gather'd in a silken cord behind,
Curl'd to the waist, and floated in the wind.
O'er these a veil of yellow gauze she wore,
With amaranths and gold embroider'd o'er;
Her snowy neck half naked to the view,
Gracefully fell; a robe of purple hue
Hung loosely o'er her tender shape, and tried
To shade those beauties that it could not hide.

**18—20.** (18) **Esther's feast,** a feast in her honour. **release,** remission of tribute. This would tend to make Esther popular. (19) **virgins . . time,** proof of the licentiousness of Xerxes. **their . . gate,** prob. in some official capacity. (20) **Esther . . people,**[a] otherwise the suspicions and vigilance of their foes might have been aroused. **did . . him,** did not cast off duty and memory of former days.

**a feast is made in honour of Esther**

*a* v. 10.

*Oriental feasts.*—The description of this feast corresponds to the statements of ancient Persian luxury and magnificence which the Greek authors have sent down to us, and which they state to have been remarkably evinced in their banquets. Their sumptuousness in this respect, indeed, became proverbial. The vast numbers of persons entertained at their great feasts, as well as the long continuance of these feasts, are points noticed by ancient writers. The Persian kings are recorded to have often feasted as many as 5,000 men at once, each time at the expense of two hundred talents. On the march to Greece, those who were required to provide for the king, and the companions of his table, were ruined, though they tarried but a night; and this not more from the number to be entertained than from their luxurious and extravagant habits, which gave occasion to the sarcasm of Megacreon of Abdera, who called upon the people to bless the gods that it was not the custom of King Xerxes to take two meals in one day; for had they been called upon to provide dinner as well as supper, they must either have fled at his approach, or have remained to be utterly ruined.

"Seest thou how pale the sated guest rises from supper, where the appetite is puzzled with varieties? The body, too, burdened with yesterday's excess, weighs down the soul, and fixes to the earth this particle of the Divine essence."—*Horace.*

**21—23.** (21) **of . . door,** they were members of the king's body-guard. **sought . . Ahasuerus,** formed a plot to assassinate the king.[a] (22) **told . . queen,** he must, therefore, have possessed means of communication with her. **Esther . . name,** she gave her authority. Her fidelity must have attached the king more closely to her. (23) **inquisition,** searching inquiry. **hanged . . tree,** crucifixion a com. punishment in Persia.[b] **written . . king,** one of the most momentous records in hist.[c]

*The wickedness of treachery.*—Of all the vices to which human nature is subject, treachery is the most infamous and detestable, being compounded of fraud, cowardice, and revenge. The greatest wrongs will not justify it, as it destroys those principles of mutual confidence and security by which only society can subsist. The Romans, a brave and generous people, disdained to practise it towards their declared enemies. Christianity teaches us to forgive injuries; but to resent them under the disguise of friendship and benevolence, argues a degeneracy at which common humanity and justice must blush.[d]—*Fabricius.*—When the physician of Pyrrhus offered to Fabricius to poison his master, the noble Roman general sent the traitor's letter to Pyrrhus, saying, "Prince, know better for the future, how to choose both your friends and foes." To requite such an act of generosity, Pyrrhus released all the Roman prisoners; but Fabricius would only receive them on condition that he would accept an equal number in exchange; "for," said he, "do not believe, Pyrrhus, that I have discovered this treachery to you out of particular regard to your person, or for the hope of advantage, but because the Romans shun base stratagems, and will not triumph but with open force."[e]

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**Mordecai discovers a plot against the king's life**

*a* Xerxes was afterwards murdered at night in his bed by two persons, one of whom was a chamberlain, and the other a captain of his guard."—*Ælian V., Hist.* xiii. 3.

*b Herod tus.* iii. 120, 125, iv. 30, vii. 194; *Thucydides,* i. 110; *Ctesias, Pers.* c 36.

*c* vi. 1.

*d L. M. Stretch.*

*e Percy Anec.*

## *CHAPTER THE THIRD.*

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**1—3.** (1) **Haman** (*illustrious*). **Agagite,** desc. of Amalekite kings, called Agag.[a] (2) **all . . bowed,** time-serving sycophants. **Mordecai,** *etc.*, because it involved religious homage;[b] and also bec. Mordecai prob. knew of ancestry of Haman. (3) **why . . commandment,** to them the word of the king was the supreme law.

**the promotion of Haman**

*a* Nu. xxiv. 7; 1 Sa. xv. 8, 32. *Josephus* (*Ant.* xi. 6, 5) calls him an Amalekite. Demócedes, Demaratus, Themistocles, Timagoras, Ctesias, are other instances of foreigners who obtained influence at the court of Persia.

*b Herodotus,* iii. 86, vii. 134, 136, viii. 118; *Æschylus, Pers* 155; *Xenophon, Cirop.* v. 3. See *Bp. Hall's Cont.* v. 2. *J. C. Dieteric. Antiq.* 393.

*c B. Kenl.*

"Vanity may be likened to the smooth-skinned

*Providence in history.*—I. Direct your attention to Haman; the vice of his soul was vanity. Comment on the events of the time. II. We shall now proceed to show how easily God can further the wishes of His people, when they rely on Him for their victory, and not on an arm of flesh. III. Every book that God has written has a Divine idea, which it is our business to discover and to study.[c]—*Mordecai's integrity.*—Describe circumstances: elevation of Haman; scene in the gate; the people humbling themselves before the great man; Eastern salutations (see *Topics for Teachers,* vol. ii. 52). I. The king's command. The people to reverence Haman; he scarcely deserved respect, much less reverence. His character: even ungodly people may for their office' sake have respect; only goodness merits reverence. The king could not give him great qualities. II. Mordecai's conduct. Did not proceed from boorishness, or lack of politeness; "he was a Jew;" his religion taught him to be inwardly sincere as well as outwardly respectful; he would not play the

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and velvet-footed mouse, nibbling about for ever in expectation of a crumb; while self-esteem is too apt to take the likeness of the huge butcher's dog, who carries off your steaks, and growls at you as he goes."—*Simms.*

*d Hive.*

**Haman resolves to destroy all the Jews for the offence of Mordecai**

*a* Ps. lxxxiii. 4. *v.* 5. *D. Lamont*, iii. 438.

"Extinguish vanity in the mind, and you naturally retrench the little superfluities of garniture and equipage. The blossoms will fall off themselves when the root that nourishes them is destroyed."—*Steele.*

"Vanity is the natural weakness of an ambitious man, which exposes him to the secret scorn and derision of those he converses with, and ruins the character he is so desirous to advance by it."—*L'Estrange.*

*b Dr. Haven.*

"O vanity, how little is thy force acknowledged, or thy operations discerned! How wantonly dost thou deceive mankind, under different disguises! Sometimes thou dost wear the face of hypocrite. Learn:—Let goodness, rather than mere office, demand respectful homage.[d]

*Conscience.*—Two men of learning were conversing together about the method they should take in reference to a certain regulation imposed upon them by the higher powers, and to which they had conscientious scruples. One of them thoughtlessly and impiously swore, "By my faith," said he, "I must live." The other calmly and pleasantly replied, "I hope to live by my faith too, though I dare not swear by it." The result was that the man who had resolved by grace to venture his temporal interests for conscience' sake lived in prosperity to see the other begging, and to contribute to his relief.

**4—6.** (4) **that .. Haman,** perh. glad of the opportunity of mortifying a man who was over them. **for .. Jew,** in wh. fact was the secret of his conduct. (5) **when .. saw,** he had not observed him in the crowd till his attention was directed to him. (6) **and .. alone,** on one poor defenceless Jew. **for .. Mordecai,** the people fr. whom his ancestors had suffered. **wherefore,** *etc.*,[a] he would avenge the past as well as punish the present offence.

*The vanity of Haman.*—I. His life illustrates the revenues of vanity. 1. There was first royal favour; 2. Popular worship. II. Consider some of the mortifications of vanity. 1. They came from a most unexpected quarter—from Mordecai, a Jew; from Mordecai, a subordinate; from Mordecai, a solitary offender; 2. They could not be counterbalanced by all the other favours he received; 3. They were intensified by the notice others took of the slight. III. Consider the cruelty of vanity. 1. To punish one man he would destroy a nation; 2. To accomplish this he would deal craftily with the king; 3. We see the cruelty of his vanity in that he was utterly indifferent to public interests. Learn—(1) To be thankful that you live under a constitutional government; (2) In troublous times to put your trust in God; (3) To pray for rulers and princes; (4) To pray and watch against vanity.

*Reward of vanity.*—There was one Michael Fenwick that travelled with Wesley as a sort of groom, nurse, and occasional exhorter. The good man was vain enough to complain one day that his name was never inserted in Wesley's published "Journals." In the next number of the "Journals" he found his name in a connection that probably did not serve to increase his vanity. "I left Epworth," wrote Wesley, "with great satisfaction, and about one preached at Clayworth. I think none were unmoved but Michael Fenwick, who fell fast asleep under an adjoining hayrick."[b]—*Vanity of vanities.*—It is at this moment, more than ever, we are justified in saying with the wise man, "Vanity of vanities: all is vanity." Where is now the splendour of the consulate? where their brilliancy of lamps and torches? the feast of joyous assemblies? Where are the crowns and magnificent ornaments? where the flattering reports of the city, the acclamations of the circus, the adulations of thousands of spectators? All have passed away. The wind by one blast has swept the leaves; and now they show to us a dead tree torn from its roots, so violent has been the tempest. It lies a broken ruin. Where are the pretended friends, the swarm of parasites, the tables charged with luxury, the wine circulated during entire

days? where the various refinements of feasting, the supple language of slaves? What has become of them all?—a dream of the night which vanishes with the day; a flower of spring which fades in the summer; a shade which passes: a vapour which scatters; a bubble of water which bursts; a spider's web which is torn down. "Vanity of vanities: all is vanity." Inscribe these words on your walls, on your vestments, on your palaces, on your streets, your houses, on your windows, on your doors; inscribe them on your consciences, in order that they may represent it incessantly to your thoughts. Repeat them in the morning; repeat them in the evening; and, in the assemblies of fashion, let each repeat to his neighbour, "Vanity of vanities; all is vanity."[c]

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pity; sometimes of generosity; nay, thou hast the assurance to put on those glorious ornaments which belong only to heroic virtue."—*Fielding.*

c *St. Chrysostom.*

**having cast lots, he seeks and obtains the king's permission**

**7—11.** (7) **Nisan,** month of the Passover. **in .. Ahasuerus,** prob. B.C. 474. **Pur,**[a] in Pers. *pâreh.*[b] **from .. day,**[c] this their custom, and Haman seems to have been guided, by their report of the lot-casting, in his conduct fr. day to day. (8) **scattered .. kingdom,**[d] it was the policy thus to distribute and separate them for obvious reasons. **laws .. people,** *etc.*, fr. his position he might be expected to have special information. (9) **let .. destroyed,** this was indeed a royal revenge for the offence of one. **pay .. treasuries,** but this was to be paid out of the spoil.[e] Not unacceptable to the king, whose wars, etc., had been expensive. (10) **ring .. enemy,** thus by the delivery of his signet-ring delegating to Haman the power of life and death. (11) **king .. Haman,** *etc.*, this shows the confidence of the king; his after wrath was in proportion to this confidence.

*Haman's murderous proposal.*—Revenge is cruel; but never more cruel than when it has its foundation in mortified pride. As to Haman's proposal, I will endeavour to set before you—I. The commonness of it. 1. In every age of the world have God's people been hated, for the very reasons that are here assigned; 2. But we need not go back into former ages for an elucidation of this truth. I proceed—II. To notice the impiety of it. 1. The accusation brought against the Jews shows what is the real ground of enmity against the Lord's people—it is that they bow down to God while others serve idols; 2. But this very preference of God to man is the very thing that gives offence: and this leads me to show—III. The folly of it. 1. Can it be thought that such feeble worms as we are should be able to prevail against Almighty God. Address—(1) Those who are the objects of the world's hatred; (2) Those who are unhappily prejudiced against the Lord's people.[f]

*Casting lots.*—It was customary in the East, by casting lots into an urn, to inquire what days would be fortunate, and what not, to undertake any business in. According to this superstitious practice, Haman endeavoured to find out what time in the year was most favourable to the Jews, and what most unlucky. First he inquired what month was most unfortunate, and found the month Adar, which was the last month in the year, answerable to our February. There was no festival during this month, nor was it sanctified by any peculiar rites. Then he inquired the day, and found the thirteenth day was not auspicious to them, ver. 13. Some think there were as many lots as there were days in the year, and for every day he drew a lot; but found none to his mind, till he came to the last month of all, and to the middle of it. Now this whole business was governed by Providence, by

*a* ix. 24.

*b* Perhaps connected with Lat. *pars.*

*c* Pr. xvi. 33.

*d* 2 Ch. xxxvi. 23; Ezr. i. 1—4.

*e v.* 13.

*v.* 7. *J. C. Dieterich, Antiq.* 397.

*f C. Simeon. M A.*

"I would much rather fight pride than vanity, because pride has a stand up way of fighting. You know where it is. It throws its black shadow on you, and you are not a loss where to strike. But vanity is that delusive, that insectiferous, that multiplied feeling, and men that fight vanities are like men that fight midges and butterflies. It is easier to chase them than to hit them."—*Beecher*

"In a vain man the smallest spark may kindle into the greatest flame because the materials are always prepared for it."—*Hume.*

"Chance never writ a legible

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book; chance never built a fair house; chance never drew a neat picture; it never did any of these things, nor ever will; nor can it be without absurdity supposed able to do them; which yet are works very gross and rude, very easy and feasible, as it were, in comparison to the production of a flower or a tree."—*Dr. Barrow.*

*g Patrick.*

"Chance is a term we apply to events to denote that they happen without any necessary or foreknown cause. When we say a thing happens by chance, we mean no more than that its cause is unknown to us, and not, as some vainly imagine, that chance itself can be the cause of anything."—*C. Buck.*

*h R. T. S.*

**preparations made for a general massacre of the Jews**

*a* i. 22, viii. 9.

*b* viii. 10.

*c* 1 Sa. xxii. 17; 2 K. x. 25, xi. 6.

See also *Herodotus*, viii. 98; *Xenophon, Cyrop.* vii. 6, 17.

*d* viii. 15; Pr. xxix. 2.

which these lots were directed, and not by the Persian gods, to fall in the last month of the year; whereby almost a whole year intervened between the design and its execution, and gave time for Mordecai to acquaint Esther with it, and for her to intercede with the king for the reversing or suspending his decree, and disappointing the conspiracy.*g*—*Illustration of chance.*—When the son of Dr. Beattie was very young, his father, being desirous of deeply impressing on his mind the important truth that God made him, used the following method to accomplish his purpose:—In the corner of a little garden, says the doctor, without informing any person of the circumstance, I wrote in the mould, with my finger, the three initial letters of his name, and sowing garden cresses in the furrows, covered up the seed and smoothed the ground. Ten days after this, he came running to me, and, with astonishment in his countenance, told me that his name was growing in the garden. I laughed at the report, and seemed inclined to disregard it, but he insisted on my going to see what had happened. "Yes," said I, carelessly, on coming to the place, "I see it is so; but what is there in this worth notice? is it not mere chance?" and I went away. He followed me, and taking hold of my coat, said with some earnestness, "It cannot have happened by chance; somebody must have contrived matters so as to produce it." "So you think," said I, "that what appears as the letters of your name cannot be by chance?" "Yes," said he, with firmness, "I think so." "Look at yourself," I replied, "and consider your hands and fingers, your legs and feet, and other limbs; are they not regular in their appearance, and useful to you?" He said they were. "Came you then hither," said I, "by chance?" "No," he answered, "that cannot be; something must have made me." "And who is that something?" I asked. He said, "I do not know." I had now gained the point I aimed at, and saw that his reason taught him, though he could not express it, that what begins to be must have a cause; and that what is formed with regularity must have an intelligent cause. I therefore told him the name of the Great Being who made him and all the world; concerning whose adorable nature I gave him such information as I thought he could in some measure comprehend. The lesson affected him greatly, and he never forgot either it or the circumstance which introduced it. Still it cannot be right for Christian parents to keep their children ignorant of God till they are five or six years old.*h*

**12—15.** (12) **scribes,** secretaries. **lieutenants,** satraps. **writing . . language,**" in a country of such vast extent many dialects and languages were spoken. **and . . ring,** wh. now Haman had. (13) **posts,***b* runners.*c* **in one day,** *etc.*, a grand Persian Bartholomew's Day. (14) **ready,** for slaughter and spoliation. With weapons, and arrangement of troops. (15) **decree . . palaces,** from head-quarters, that none might question the authority. **king . . drink,** making merry by anticipation at overthrow of the Jews. **city . . perplexed,***d* many grieved, many wondering where the slaughter would end: and fearing that private quarrels might be revenged under cover of this dreadful public act.

*Sealing of documents in the East.*—The Rev. H. B. Tristram, in travelling through Palestine, desiring a number of guards in order to secure to his party a safe passage through parts of the

land, it was necessary for a treaty to be drawn up to complete the arrangements. He says: "Then came the momentous business of affixing the seals. The seal was not worn in this case on the finger, but from the depths of some part of the sheikh's under garments an unsavoury cotton rag was produced, knotted and twisted, at one end of which was carefully folded the signet ring. A little ink being rubbed over it, it was then impressed upon the documents. As the chieftain could not write, we saw at once the jealous precaution with which the signet was guarded. 'To trust a man with your ring,' is a Bedouin proverb expressive of unbounded confidence, and indeed it would practically amount to entrusting a friend in England with blank signed cheques. The signature written with the pen was no security in the Arab's eye, and we were requested, after we had signed the deeds, to affix our seals, not with wax, but with ink; nor till this ceremony was completed did Sheikh Hamzi's deep-set eye twinkle on the pile of sovereigns on the office table as without doubt his own."

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"Never expect justice from a vain man; if he has the negative magnanimity not to disparage you, it is the most you can expect."—*Washington Allston.*

"Gluttony and drunkenness have two evils attendant on them; they make the carcase smart, as well as the pocket."—*Antoninus.*

## *CHAPTER THE FOURTH.*

**Mordecai's sorrow on hearing of this decree**

**1—3.** (1) **when . . done,** he would soon hear of it, and see the preparations. **rent . . ashes,**[a] com. signs of great sorrow of heart. (2) **before,** over against. **none . . sackcloth,** no signs of sorrow permitted in the palace whence had gone the occasion of sorrow to so many homes. (3) **great . . Jews,**[b] a part of Haman's revenge was that the Jews should not only be doomed, but know it, and live in dreadful anticipation of it.

*Shushan, "the City of the Lily."*—"The City of the Lily," in the garden of the Lord. Here Œbares plotted the fraudulent omen which was to place Darius upon the Persian throne; here, according to St. Jerome, was the palace or castle of Daniel the Prophet; and by the banks of the stream, if Jewish and Mohammedan tradition may be credited, is the humble tomb where, doubly wrapped in cloth of gold, his body awaits the resurrection of the just. From Shushan's once magnificent pavilions went forth the army of Xerxes to the conquest of Greece, and here the queen received the tidings of their total and ignominious defeat. Here Artaxerxes held his royal banquet of fourscore days' duration; here Haman concerted the destruction of the Jews; and here also the amiable Smerdis fell beneath the blow of an assassin deputed by his brother Cambyses. On this spot Sardanapalus III. (Ashur-banipal), B.C. 700, overthrew the Greco-Syrian Empire, and savagely superintended the execution of its sovereign in the burning ruins of his own citadel. Generation after generation has passed into eternity,—the Caliph Omar and the Emperor Sanjar, Mede and Persian, Turk and Arab, Zend and Mohammedan have successively conquered and successively revelled in the marble colonnades and tapestried chambers of a capital which has perished from its glory for ever.

[a] 2 Sa. i. 11; Josh. vii. 6; Ez. xxvii. 30.

[b] Isa. lviii. 5; Da. ix. 3.

"It is easy in adversity to despise death: real fortitude has he who can dare to be wretched."—*Seneca.*

"Sorrow, like a heavy hanging bell, once set on ringing, with his own weight goes; then little strength rings out the doleful knell."—*Shakespeare.*

**Esther sends Hatach with a gift to comfort**

**4—6.** (4) **so . . her,** the ill news had not yet reached the women's apartments. **sent . . not,** she thought to show sympathy with him for some private grief. (5) **then . . was,** the return of the presents suggested some greater sorrow than she

"All sympathy

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had suspected. (6) **which . . gate,** the resort of Mordecai was well known.

*A motive for kindness.*—M. Labat, a merchant of Bayonne, ill in health, had retired in the beginning of the winter, 1803, to a country-house on the banks of the Adour. One morning, when promenading in his *robe-de-chambre*, on a terrace elevated a little above the river, he saw a traveller thrown by a furious horse, from the opposite bank, into the midst of the torrent. M. Labat was a good swimmer. He did not stop a moment to reflect on the danger of the attempt, but threw off his *robe-de-chambre*, leaped into the flood, and caught the drowning stranger at the moment when, having lost all sensation, he must have otherwise inevitably perished. "O God!" exclaimed M. Labat, clasping him in his arms, and recognising, with a transport of joy, the individual he had saved,—"sacred humanity! what do I not owe thee? I have saved my son!" [a]

not consistent with acknowledged virtue is but disguised selfishness." — *Coleridge.*

"It is a lively spark of nobleness to descend in most favour to one when he is lowest in affliction." — *Sir P. Sidney.*

[a] *Percy Anec.*

**Mordecai tells Hatach, who tells Esther of the decree**

**7—9.** (7) **told,** *etc.*, Hatach, as connected with the queen's apartments, seems not to have known of this. (8) **also . . decree,** *etc.*, lest so incredible a story should be doubted. **Esther . . people,** for the life of a whole people depended now on her. (9) **Hatach,** *etc.*, the message no doubt filled her with sorrow and perplexity.

*Character of a newsmonger.*—A newsmonger is a retailer of rumour, that takes up upon trust, and sells as cheap as he buys. He deals in a commodity that will not keep; for if it be not fresh, it lies upon his hands, and will yield nothing. True or false, it is all one to him; for novelty being the grace of both, a truth grows stale as soon as a lie: and as a slight suit will last as well as a better while the fashion holds, a lie serves as well as truth till new ones come up. He is little concerned whether it be good or bad, for that does not make it more or less news; and if there be any difference, he loves the bad best, because it is said to come soonest; for he would willingly bear his share in any public calamity to have the pleasure of hearing and telling it. He tells news, as men do money, with his fingers; for he assures them it comes from very good hands. The whole business of his life is like that of a spaniel, to fetch and carry news; and when he does it well, he is clapped on the back, and fed for it; for he does not take to it altogether like a gentleman, for his pleasure; but when he lights on a considerable parcel of news, he knows where to put it off for a dinner, and quarter himself upon it, until he has eaten it out; and by this means he drives a trade, by retrieving the first news to truck it for the first meat in season; and, like the old Roman luxury, ransacks all seas and lands to please his palate.[a]

"Every man rejoices twice who has a partner in his joy; a friend shares my sorrow and makes it but a moiety, but he swells my joy and makes it double."—*Jeremy Taylor.*

"Every human feeling is greater and larger than the exciting cause,—a proof, I think, that man is designed for a higher state of existence, and this is deeply implied in music, in which there is always something more and beyond the immediate expression."—*Coleridge.*

[a] *Butler.*

**Esther reports to Mordecai her relations with the king**

**10—12.** (10) **again,** *etc.*, she had grown accustomed to seek his advice, and follow his instructions.[a] (11) **come . . called,** she knew no request for a private interview would ever reach the king: and to go without being called was perilous. **but . . days,** possibly ii. 19 may explain this: some new favourite may have filled the king's time and thought. (12) **and . . words,** it was well that they had a faithful messenger at this time.

*Divine purposes in human circumstances.*—It is instructive to observe how little the heart of Esther was changed by her elevation to the throne. Also to note that filial piety meets with its reward. I. We have here suggested what we believe to be a

[a] ii. 20.

"Who is it that will doubt the care of heaven, or think immortal powers are slow, 'cause

principle in the Divine government, namely, that whenever the child of God occupies a position by the appointment of Providence, it is that he may there perform some specific work for God. 1. It is past all reasonable belief that God can do anything without a purpose; 2. How much more confidently may this be believed of human life; 3. Still greater are the reasons why His children should be under His special control, and lie within His plans; 4. Nor is it needful that one should be in an exalted position in order that God may use him. II. It should be our endeavour to discover and to do the work for which God has introduced us to our present circumstances. III. Our diligent performance of what appears to be a duty may be the surest way to work with God and to secure our own prosperity.

*Consolation respecting Providence.*—Whatever way I turned nothing appeared but danger and difficulty. I saw myself in the midst of a vast wilderness, in the depth of the rainy season, naked and alone, surrounded by savage animals, and men still more savage. I was five hundred miles from the nearest European settlement. At this moment, painful as my reflections were, the extraordinary beauty of a small moss irresistibly caught my eye. I mention it to show from what trifling circumstances the mind will sometimes derive consolation; for though the whole plant was not larger than the top of one of my fingers, I could not contemplate the delicate conformation of its roots and leaves without admiration. Can that Being, thought I, who planted, watered, and brought to perfection in this obscure part of the world a thing which appears of so small importance, look with unconcern upon the situation and sufferings of creatures formed after His own image? Surely not! I started up, and, disregarding both hunger and fatigue, travelled forward, assured that relief was at hand; and I was not disappointed.[b]

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"they take the privilege to choose their own time, when they will send their blessings down?"—*Davenant.*

"Appetite is the will's solicitor, the will is the appetite's controller. No desire is properly called will, unless where reason and understanding prescribe the thing desired."—*Hooker.*

"No man's body is as strong as his appetites, but heaven has corrected the boundlessness of his voluptuous desires by stinting his strength and contracting his capacities."—*Tillotson.*

*b Mungo Park.*

**13, 14.** (13) **think . . Jews,** he appeals to her own love of life, wh. through the fickleness of the king might not be safe. (14) **enlargement,** *lit.* respiration, breathing time, prolonged life. **and . . place,** he had faith that God would deliver His people, and that she would, if obedient, be the honoured instrument of their safety. **who . . time,** she was not to regard the exaltation to the throne as the Divine purpose in her life. It seemed to Mordecai that the strange life of Esther was designed by Providence to effect the safety of the Israel of God.

**Esther is reminded of her duty**

*vv.* 13, 14. *Dr. A. Rees,* iii. 386; *J. Alting, Op.* 2, pa s. 2, 158.

*God's purpose and man's opportunity.*—I purpose, in humble dependence on Divine help, to draw from the text the following general truths: that running through the Providence of this world there is a gracious Divine purpose for its ultimate salvation; that rich and rare opportunities occur in the progress of things, by which believing men are allowed to come effectually "to the help of the Lord against the mighty;" that the neglect of such providential calls has a tendency to bring destruction; that obedience brings elevation and blessing. Let us then consider—I. The Divine purpose. II. Human opportunity. III. The law of destruction. IV. The law of life.[a]

"Every subject's duty is the king's; but every subject's soul is his own."—*Shakespeare.*

"We are apt to mistake our vocation by looking out of the way for occasions to exercise great and rare virtues, and by stepping over the ordinary ones that lie directly in the road before us."—*Hannah More.*

*a Dr. Raleigh.*

*Way to accept providential dispensations.*—My darling child lies sick—my only daughter, and am I, as a minister of God and an exemplar to men, in submission to the will of my Master, to say that this sickness is unto death? Because the physician says she will not recover, and the nurse says she cannot recover, and

"There are not good things

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r gh in life to ndemnify us for the neglect of a single duty."—*Mad. Swetchine.*

my own fears say she may not recover, am I to say, "It is the will of the Lord she should die; the will of the Lord be done?" No! I will fight death to the last; and when I have made good battle, with all the love, and wisdom, and patience, and fidelity I possess, and the shadow has fallen, and I am defeated, then I accept the event; it is proved a true prophet at last; but I would not believe it until I had tested it. Then I say, "It was the will of the Lord she should die; the will of the Lord be done." Not when the revelation first comes do I accept it as an expression of the will of God, but when it has done its last work—that is the revelation. Facts threatening are not revelations; facts accomplished are.

**Esther is commanded to do her duty, and commands a feast**

**15—17.** (15) **answer,** an answer that, manifesting Esther's piety, must have greatly comforted him. (16) **gather . . fast,** *etc.*, by fasting and prayer she thought to arm herself with the protection of God. **perish,**[a] she could but perish at the worst. (17) **so . . way,** *etc.*, it was now his turn to obey.

*The valorous queen* (*v.* 16).—Esther may be regarded as a type of a soul anxious about his salvation, resolving to dare everything for this. . . . . We shall endeavour from the behaviour of Esther in this particular case to excite all classes of men to earnest importunity for spiritual blessings. Observe—I. The momentous considerations which led her to make this resolution. 1. Personal considerations; 2. National considerations; 3. Religious considerations. II. The almost insuperable ob ·les in the way of her enterprise. 1. The king's indifference to her; 2. The established law; 3. The power of Haman. III. The indomitable courage displayed both in the making of this resolution, and in the prosecution of this enterprise. The conduct of every earnest soul is very much alike. . . . . Her eye is fixed on the goal; she will either reach it or perish in the attempt. Saith the Scripture, "Add to your faith valour."

*Providence the guardian of our weakness.*—That image in Lowell's poem of "The Changeling" fascinates me. It is so much what I am and ever wish to be.

"I feel as weak as a violet
Alone 'neath the awful sky."

Unable to defend myself and apparently undefended, yet guarded by omnipotent love, I would fain pour out a perfume of praise to the Great Invisible who watches over me, and would feel that under the care of Providence I may claim the sweetness of the poet's next stanza:—

"As weak, yet as trustful also;
For the whole year long I see
All the wonders of faithful nature
Still worked for the love of me.
Winds wander and dews drip earthward,
Rains fall, suns rise and set,
Earth whirls, and all but to prosper
A poor little violet."[b]

*God knows when to answer prayer.*—"God always hears when we scrape the bottom of the flour barrel." So said the child of a poor widow to his mother, one morning, after she had prayed as only the needy can, "Give us this day our daily bread." Beautiful faith of childhood! Why may it not be ours? God always hears the prayers of His children, and He knows when to answer.

[a] Ge. xliii. 14.

r. 16. *Dr. J. Donne*, vi. 70; *R. P. Buddicom*, i. 314.

"I was acquainted once with a gallant soldier who assured me that his only measure of courage was this: upon the first fire, in an engagement, he immediately looked upon himself as a dead man. He then fought out the remainder of the day perfectly regardless of all manner of danger, as becomes a dead man to be. So that all the life or limbs he carried back again to his tent he reckoned as clear gains, or, as he himself expressed it, so much out of the fire."—*Sterne.*

[b] *Spurgeon.*

"Behold us willing to suffer in this life the worst it may please Thee to bring upon us; here lay Thy rod upon us; consume us here, cut us to pieces here, only spare us in eternity!"—*St. Augustine.*

## CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

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**Esther ventures before the king**

**1, 2.** (1) **now . . day,**[a] of the feast. **her . . apparel,** *lit.* her royalty; *i.e.* the insignia of her titles. (2) **when . . court,**[b] whom he had not seen for some time. **king . . hand,** the usual sign of favour and welcome. **touched . . sceptre,** in token of her submission.

*A bold petitioner.*—The Romans had a law that no person should approach the emperor's tent in the night, upon pain of death; but it once happened that a soldier was found in that situation, with a petition in his hand, waiting for an opportunity of presenting it. He was apprehended, and going to be immediately executed; but the emperor, having overheard the matter in his pavilion, cried aloud, saying, "If the petition be for himself, let him die; if for another, spare his life." Upon inquiry, it was found that the generous soldier prayed for the lives of his two comrades who had been taken asleep on the watch. The emperor nobly forgave them all.

**3–5.** (3) **given . . kingdom,** an expression denoting great liberality. (4) **let . . prepared,** customary to grant requests at banquets; by that time she would be able to frame her request. (5) **cause . . haste,** Esther invited Haman as the king's favourite. It might also be so to move him by her kindness as to lead him to counteract the decree.

*A royal promise fulfilled.*—Dr. Lyons, who was preferred to the bishopric of Cork, Cloyne, and Ross, during the latter part of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, held the benefice for twenty years, but never preached but once, which was on the death of the queen. On that melancholy occasion he thought it his duty to pay the last honours to his royal mistress, and accordingly ascended the pulpit in Christ Church, Cork, where he delivered a good discourse on the uncertainty of life, and the great and amiable qualities of her majesty. He concluded in the following warm but whimsical manner:—"Let those who feel this loss deplore with me on this melancholy occasion; but if there be any that hear me who have secretly wished for this event (as perhaps there may be), they have now got their wish, and may it do them all the good they deserve." The bishop's aversion to preaching is supposed to have arisen from his not having been intended for the Church. His promotion is very singular: he was captain of a ship, and distinguished himself so gallantly in several actions with the Spaniards, that, on being introduced to the queen, she told him that he should have the first vacancy that offered. The honest captain, who understood the queen literally, soon after hearing of a vacancy in the see of Cork, immediately set out for court, and claimed the royal promise. The queen, astonished at the request, for a time remonstrated against the impropriety of it, and said that she could never think it a suitable office for him. It was, however, in vain; he pleaded the royal promise, and relied on it. The queen then said she would take a few days to consider of the matter, when, examining into his character, and finding that he was a sober, moral man, as well as an intrepid commander, she sent for him, and gave him the bishopric,

[a] iv. 16.

[b] iv. 11, vi. 4 See *Bp. Hall, Co't.*

A man complained to his pastor that he had prayed a whole year for the comforts of religion, but had received no answer. His minister replied, "Go home and pray, 'Father, glorify Thyself.'"

**Esther's invitation to a banquet**

"Liberal of cruelty are those who pamper with promises: promisers destroy while they deceive, and the hope they raise is dearly purchased by the dependence that is consequent to disappointment."—*Zimmerman.*

"I had rather do and not promise, than promise and not do."—*Arthur Warwick.*

"An acre of performance is worth the whole world of promise."—*Howell.*

It was said of one of the emperors of Rome, that he was careful of what was done by him, but careless of what was said of him. Bradford says, "Do well and bear ill" is written upon the gates of heaven.

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saying, she "hoped he would take as good care of the Church as he had done of the State."[a]

*a Percy Anec.*

**at the banquet Esther proposes another banquet**

6—8. (6) **king . . wine,** *etc.*, reminding her of what he had promised. (7) **my . . request,** she saw that the moment had not come for preferring her request. (8) **king . . them,** though kings ate alone, his guests were allowed to take wine with him afterwards.

*v. 6. S. Lavington,* i. 481.

"As those who keep clocks wind them up daily, lest the weights should run down and the clock stop; so we must set apart some portion of every day for meditation and prayer, lest our hearts should so far descend, through the weight of the cares of this world, that our course in godliness should be hindered and stopped."—*Cawdray.*

*Esther an example in prayer.*—I. Consider the noble conduct of Esther on this trying occasion. 1. The cause she undertook was God's cause; 2. The service she performed was at the peril of her life; 3. With glowing zeal she combined consummate prudence. II. The encouragement to believing prayer which her example affords. 1. We come into the presence not of a tyrant but of a kind and indulgent Father; 2. We are not forbidden, but expressly invited, to approach Him; 3. While Esther had a rigid law to repress her, we have promises in our favour; 4. We have not a Haman at court opposed to us, but a heavenly Friend and Intercessor to plead with us and for us. Learn:—(1) God in His providence prevents the fears and exceeds the expectations of those who wait upon Him; (2) God must be served and honoured in the face of danger and rebuke; (3) To embark in the cause of God is to be allied to an interest certain of success; (4) If the love of life could inspire such pathetic pleadings, how much more the love of souls, both of our own and others!

A plain man once said, "Before my conversion, when I prayed in the presence of others I prayed to them; when I prayed in secret I prayed to myself; but now I pray to God."

Prayer is the very essence of spirituality.

*Earnest seeking.*—An old phrase speaks of "leaving no stone unturned," when one makes an earnest search. It is as though hidden beneath some stone there was a treasure, and the searchers who were determined to discover it went forth, not merely looking upon the ground, or upon every stone, but actually turning each stone out of its place, to make sure of the concealed treasure if it were beneath. So Ahab and Obadiah went forth to search for water. A man who had long been seeking religion in a half-hearted way, one day lost his pocket-book. He said to his wife, "I know it is in the barn; I had it after I went there, and before I left it was gone. I am going back to find it; and find it I will, if I have to move every straw." Such seeking soon secured the prize, and enabled the wife so clearly to illustrate the way to seek Jesus, that the man soon found Him also, and rejoiced in a found salvation.

**Haman relates his greatness to friends**

9—11. (9) **then . . heart,** forth fr. the king's presence puffed up by vanity. **but . . Mordecai,**[a] the increased favour of the king made him the more indignant. (10) **refrained,**[b] he could afford to do so, since the day of his revenge was at hand. **he . . friends,** some that perh. he would mortify by recounting the honours heaped upon him. **Zeresh,**[c] he sent for her, as one would bear rule in his own house. (11) **Haman . . riches,** *etc.*, what contemptible vanity was all this!

*a* iii. 5.
*b* 2 S. xiii. 22.
*c* Said to have been dau. of Tatnai, who was gov. of W. of Euphrates in time of Darius, Ezr. v. 3, 6, vi. 6, 13.

*Personal vanity.*—"Thou hast (saith a man to himself) rare endowments of soul, and wonderful skill and ability in this and that matter; thou art master of excellent things; thou hast managed very important business; hast accomplished hard designs; hast achieved brave feats with great wit and industry; thou hast framed and vented very curious orations, very facetious speeches, very nervous and pithy discourses; thou hast put obligations upon this man and that; thou hast got much credit and

"'Tis thus that pride triumphant rears her head,—a little while, and all the power is fled."—*Goldsmith.*

interest among men ; the world much looketh on thee, loveth and prizeth thee hugely, resoundeth with thy fame and praise ; surely thy worth is notable, thy deserts are egregious ; how happy art thou in being such a person, in performing such things, in enjoying such advantages !"[d]

**12—14.** (12) **moreover,** *etc.*,[a] reserving this crowning honour as a final surprise. **come . . myself,** in this respect treated with equal honour to the king. (13) **yet,** *etc.*, one small drawback embitters the whole. The story of his honours seems to have been intended to enhance the enormity of Mordecai's offence. (14) **gallows,**[b] *Heb.* tree.[c] **fifty . . high,** or ab. 75 ft. **then . . banquet,** after thou hast had thy revenge ; perh. they thought it justice. **and . . Haman,** wherefore then were all the Jews to be slain, if this one was to be signally punished for his fault? **he . . made,**[d] in anticipation of the king's approval.

*Haman's confession.*—I. It is calculated to impress two things upon us. 1. That material things cannot make us happy ; 2. That human happiness is all too easily destroyed. II. The mistakes into which Haman fell. 1. He thought far too much about Mordecai's refusal to pay him the homage to which he considered he was entitled ; 2. He set too high a value on the respect of Mordecai. III. The principal lesson to learn is to think more about what we have than what we want.[e]

*Vanity rebuked.*—A young clergyman, boasting among his relations of having been educated at two colleges, Harvard and Cambridge, an aged divine, being present, said, "You remind me of an instance I knew of a calf that sucked two cows." "What was that?" said a third person. "Why, sir, the consequence was, that he was a very great calf."[f]—*Pride.*—Take some quiet, sober moment of life, and add together the two ideas of pride and man ; behold him, creature of a span high, stalking through infinite space in all the grandeur of littleness. Perched on a speck of the universe, every wind of heaven strikes into his blood the coldness of death ; his soul floats from his body like melody from the string ; day and night, as dust on the wheel, he is rolled along the heavens, through a labyrinth of worlds, and all the creations of God are flaming above and beneath. Is this a creature to make for himself a crown of glory, to deny his own flesh, to mock at his fellow, sprung from that dust to which both will soon return? Does the proud man not err? Does he not suffer? Does he not die? When he reasons, is he never stopped by difficulties? When he acts, is he never tempted by pleasure? When he lives, is he free from pain? When he dies, can he escape the common grave? Pride is not the heritage of man ; humility should dwell with frailty, and atone for ignorance, error, and imperfection.[g]

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*d Dr. Barrow.*

the advice of Haman's wife

*a* ix. 7.

*b* vii. 9.

*c* The Vulg. has *crux*; in Josephus (*Ant.* ix. 6, 10), and in the LXX. it is *xúlon*, the word used for cross: Ac. v. 30, x. 39, xiii. 29, xvi. 24; 1 Pet. ii. 24.

*d* vii. 10.

*e* 13. *H. Wharton*, ii. 51: *R. Theed, Sac Biog.* 157: *Dr. J. Coney*, i. 291; *F. Webb*, ii. 171; *J. Balguy*, i. 77; *Dr. H. Blair*, i. 173; *J. Charlesworth*, ii. 213; *D. W. Garrow*, 145; *W. Richardson*, ii. 166.

*f Dr. Beaumont.*

"It is vanity, that mental mole, the dense ophthalmia of the vacant mind, which whispers we may stem the strong control of every wave that in our course we find."—*Calder Campbell.*

*g Sidney Smith.*

"When pride begins, love ceases."—*Lavater.*

## *CHAPTER THE SIXTH.*

B.C. *cir.* 510.

**1—3.** (1) **on . . sleep,** *lit.* the king's sleep fled away ;[a] an unusual thing. **he . . chronicles,**[b] to pass the time, to lull him to sleep. **they . . king,** a providential selection. (2) **written,** *etc.*, ii. 21. (3) **what . . this?** his conscience pricked him for suffering the saviour of his life to be possibly unrewarded.

*Ahasuerus' sleepless night.*—1. Who is the sleep monarch on this night? 2. What was the book he read that night? 3. What was the discovery he made that night? We learn hence lessons

the king's sleepless night

*a* The Heb. verb denot. the fluttering, unsubstantory movements of a bird's wings. Is. x. 14; Pr. xxvii. 8; Je. iv. 25.

*b* ii. 23. See *Bp.*

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*Andrewes.* iv. 396. See *Bp. Hall, Cont.*

v. 1. *H. Melvill,* i. 141.

c *Dr. Thomas.*

"Every bullet has its billet."—*Bowes.* All providences to a gracious heart are but so many fulfilments.

"He who plays with dollars in his youth will have to beg for farthings in his age."—*Heine.*

d *Hice.*

"When one asked Alexander how he could sleep so soundly and securely in the midst of danger, he told them that Parmenio watched; he might well sleep when Parmenio watched. Oh how securely may they sleep over whom He watches that never slumbers nor sleeps! 'I will,' said David, 'lay me down and sleep, for Thou Lord makest me to dwell in safety.'"—*Venning.*

"God gives sleep to the bad, in order that the good may be undisturbed."—*Sadi.*

"Oh, sleep, sweet sleep! whatever form thou takest, thou art fair, holding unto our lips thy goblet filled out of oblivion's well a healing draught!"—*Longfellow.*

e *Leisure Hour,* 1852.

in connection with God's government of the world. I. He often works out His purposes through the free workings of depraved minds, unconscious of His influence. II. He always overrules the conduct of sinners for the overthrow of their plans. III. He sometimes works out His purposes by means apparently the most insignificant.[c]—*Sleepless nights.*—Sketch the scene—night coming down on the great city, night in the palace; everything to court sleep—soft couches, gentle strains of music. But—I. God is the Lord of sleep. He made sleep (see *Topics,* vol. ii. 2), and night for sleep; we should be ill if long without sleep. II. God sometimes withholds sleep. Men variously account for not sleeping; it may be Providence; was so in this case. III. God both gives and withholds sleep for our good. Hence, be thankful for sleep and improve its absence (Ps. lxiii. 6). We have a "book of records"—memory: its pages may remind us of things to be done and things to be repented of. In this case the fate of a nation depended on the use made of waking hours.[d]

*Providence of God in withholding sleep.*—The late Sir Evan Nepean, when Under-Secretary of State, related to a friend of his that one night he had the most unaccountable wakefulness that could be imagined. He was in perfect health, had dined early and moderately, had no care—nothing to brood over—and was perfectly self-possessed. Still he could not sleep, and from eleven till two in the morning had never closed an eye. It was summer, and twilight had far advanced; and to dissipate the *ennui* of his wakefulness, he resolved to rise and breathe the morning air in the park. There he saw nothing but sleepy sentinels, whom he rather envied. He passed the Home Office several times, and at last, without any particular object, resolved to let himself in with his pass key. The book of entries of the day before lay open on the table, and in sheer listlessness he began to read. The first thing appalled him!—"A reprieve to be sent to York for the coiners ordered for execution the next day." It struck him that he had no return to his order to send the reprieve, and he searched the minutes, but could not find it. In alarm, he went to the house of the chief clerk, who lived in Downing Street, knocking him up (it was then long past three), and asked him if he knew anything of the reprieve being sent. In greater alarm, the chief clerk could not remember. "You are scarcely awake," said Sir Evan; "collect yourself: it must have been sent." The chief clerk said he did now recollect he had sent it to the Clerk of the Crown, whose business it was to forward it. "Good!" said Sir Evan; "but have you his receipt and certificate that it is gone?" "No!" "Then come with me to his house. We must find him, though it is so early!" It was now four, and the Clerk of the Crown lived in Chancery Lane. There was no hackney coach, and they almost ran. The Clerk of the Crown had a country house, and meaning to have a long holiday, he was at that moment stepping into his gig, to go to his villa. Astonished at the visit of the Under-Secretary at such an hour, he was still more so at his business. With an exclamation of horror, cried the Clerk of the Crown, "The reprieve is locked up in my desk!" It was brought. Sir Evan sent to the Post Office for the trustiest and fleetest express, and the reprieve reached York at the moment the unhappy people were ascending the cart. Surely this was the finger of God.[e]

**4—6.** (4) **who . . court?** although so early some one might be there. **Haman,** *etc.*, anxious to prefer his request.[a] (5) **Haman . . court,** *etc.*, who so fit to decide on the mode of honouring a man as one who had been himself greatly honoured? (6) **Haman . . heart,** *etc.*, the king's question was in accord with his vanity. The king's manner, too, may have led him to suppose that *he* was meant.

*A sleepless night.*—A few years ago, a pious man at Gravesend had retired to rest late on the Saturday night, having first secured the doors and windows of his house and shop. Weary, however, as he was with the labours of the week, he found it impossible to sleep; and, having tossed about in his bed for an hour or two without rest, he resolved to rise and spend an hour in the perusal of his Bible, as preparatory to the engagements of the Sabbath. He went down stairs with the Bible under his arm, and advancing towards one of the outer doors, he found several men who had broken into the house, and who but for this singular interruption would probably, in a very short period, have deprived him of the whole of his property.[b]

**7—9.** (7) **Haman answered,** promptly, joyously. (8) **let . . wear,** all this points not only to the vain but treasonable heart of Haman. **horse . . upon,** of a special breed called Nisecœn. (9) **hand . . princes,** thinking of himself, he would be served like a king. **bring . . city,** *etc.*, Haman coveted for himself all this popular applause.

*Courts in king's houses.*—"In an old account, quoted by Calmet, of the visit of some ambassadors, with their retinue, to the palace of the Turkish emperor, it is mentioned, that after passing through two gates, each conducting into large courts, they were led through a third gate into the private palace of the emperor, where are none but himself and a few chosen attendants; into which chosen part of the palace none entereth but the keeper of the third gate, and some great men, and that only when they have an occasion so to do by reason of some great business, or when sent for by the Sultan. Being entered in at this gate, their conductor suddenly caused them to stay, and set them one from another about five paces, in a little room, which nevertheless was passing delicate, all curiously painted over with divers colours, and stood between the gate and the more inner lodgings. On both sides of which room, when all things else were in deep silence, certain little birds only were heard to warble out their sweet notes, and to flicker up and down the green trees of the gardens, which all along cast a pleasant shadow from them. Selymus himself was in great majesty set in an under chamber, parted only with a wall from the room wherein the ambassadors' followers attended, whereunto he might look through a little window, the portal of his said chamber standing in counterpoint with the third gate above mentioned. The ambassadors entering in were led singly . . . to make their reverence unto the Great Turk. . . . Yet for all that, the ambassadors' followers, placed one foot from another, were not aware that the great Sultan was so near as is aforesaid. . . . Thus Queen Esther stood in the inner court, *i.e.* within the third gate of entrance, over against the king's house—*i.e.* that smaller chamber where sat the Turkish emperor. And the king sat upon his royal throne, in the royal house, over against the gate (or entrance

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**the king seeks the advice of Haman**

*a* v. 14.

"Pride discovers itself in dwelling upon the thoughts of our gifts, with a secret kind of content to see our own face till at last we fall in love with it. A proud heart is full of himself; his own abilities cast their shadow before him; they are in his eye wherever he goes; the great subject and theme of his thoughts is what he is, and what he hath above all others. Run from such thoughts as from a bear."—*A Divine of the Seventeenth Century.*

*b R. T. S. Anec.*

**Haman gives his advice**

It will be remembered that the bestowing of dresses as a mark of honour among Eastern nations is one of the most ancient customs recorded both in sacred and profane history. We may learn how great was the distinction of giving a coat already worn by what is said of Jonathan's love for David, as well as from the history of Mordecai.

"Pride, in boasting of family antiquity, makes duration stand for merit."—*Zimmerman*

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*a Scrip. Man. and Cust. S. P. C. K.*

portico) of the house where he sat; so that through the portal of his chamber he could see any person approaching towards him, or standing in the court adjacent to him."[a]

**10, 11.** (10) **make . . horse,** for thou art one of the king's most noble princes. **do . . gate,**[a] no time to say a word about the gallows. **let . . spoken,** *lit.* suffer not a whit to fall. (11) **then . . Mordecai,** with what an ill grace he must have played his part! **and . . city,** Haman walking like a servant at the bridle-rein. **thus . . honour,** using words that he himself had recommended. How little did the king know what torture he was inflicting!

*Royal presents to an official.*—The presentation as a gift from a royal personage of that which had been worn on his own person was a special mark of favour and condescension. Morier, in his narrative of *A Second Journey through Persia*, thus illustrates this custom:—"When a treaty between Russia and Persia was concluded, some years since, in the commencement, according to the usual form, the ranks of the two principal persons who were deputed to arrange it had to be specified. The Russian general was found to have more titles than the Persian plenipotentiary, who was therefore at a loss how to make himself appear of equal importance with the other negotiator; but at length, recollecting that, previous to his departure for the place of conference, his sovereign had honoured him by a present of one of his own swords, and of a dagger set with precious stones, to wear which is a peculiar distinction in Persia, and besides had clothed him with one of his own shawl robes, a distinction of still greater value, he therefore designated himself as 'endowed with the special gifts of the monarch, lord of the dagger set in jewels, of the sword adorned with gems, and of the shawl coat already worn.'"

**12—14.** (12) **Mordecai . . gate,** the whole event must have been to him a welcome inspirer of hope just at that time. After the honour he returned to his duty. **Haman . . covered,**[a] saw it would be vain to prefer his request. (13) **wise men,** diviners, those who had cast lots before him. **if . . Jews,** *etc.*, they prob. thought the decree had excited Mordecai and Esther, and that this humiliation of Haman was the first fruit of their influence. (14) **while . . him,** *etc.*, the effect of their predictions would be a perturbed state of mind, and that would help forward the fulfilment. Where is the merriment they promised?[b]

*Haman's disgrace.*—I. The world's councils are pernicious and unfaithful. II. No worldly advantage will avail one whom God has forsaken. III. The special immunities enjoyed by the Hebrews are transferred to the Christians. IV. God takes particular cognizance of His people in relation to men's dealings with them. V. All the enemies of God and His people are a doomed race.

*A sleepless night.*—"Because God wouldn't let him." was the answer given by a little boy in one of our Sunday schools of a large city in the west of England to a question asked by the teacher in reference to the Persian monarch not being able to enjoy his accustomed slumbers. It was a simple but sound reply, for God's providence was watching over His ancient people, and when they appeared to be in imminent danger of falling by the hand of the sword He again proved faithful to His promises, and made transpiring events and circumstances to be subservient to

**the discomfiture of Haman**

*a* "The king knew the Jewish origin of his benefactor Mordecai, and was thus better prepared to receive Esther's petition on behalf of herself and her people."—*Wordsworth.*

Spencer says, that only a little wind is required to expand a bladder to great size, when, if a few beans be put into it, and shaken, the noise will frighten an army; but only a pin is required to reduce it to insignificance again.

**the prediction of Haman's friends**

*a* 2 Ch. xxvi. 20; 2 Sa. xv. 30; Je. xiv. 3, 4.

*b* v. 14.

"Pride is a double traitor, and betrayeth itself to entrap thee, making thee vain of thy self-knowledge; proud of thy discoveries of pride."—*Tupper.*

"Pride either finds a desert or makes one; submission cannot tame its ferocity, nor satiety fill its voracity; and it requires very costly food — its keeper's happiness."—*Colton.*

His purpose. "On that night the king could not sleep," because—

"There's a Divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will."[c]

B.C *cir.* 510.

*c Bibl. Treas.*

## *CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.*

B.C. *cir.* 510.

**1—4.** (1) **to banquet,** *lit.* to drink. (2) **said . . day,**[a] this being that day. (3) **my life . . request,** a large request in the face of an unalterable decree. (4) **although,** even in that case. **the . . damage,** rather read, "the enemy is not comparable with:" *i.e.* the man so selling us could not compensate the king for the loss his exchequer would suffer.

*Kindness to God's people.*—A lady was making great preparations for the coming of several young guests to her house. Their home was far distant, and she had never seen them. But she spared no pains to provide for them a welcome. "Why do you take so much trouble for persons whom you never saw?" said an intimate associate to the lady. "I do it," was the reply. "though I never saw them, for their mother's sake; she was the playmate of my childhood, the loved and trusted companion of my riper years, and now, in our maturity, though widely separated in body, we are closer than ever in heart. For her sake, if for no other, the coming guests are welcome to the best I have."[b]

Esther's second banquet

*a* v. 6. See *Up. Hall. Cont.* "I would rather make short prayers than extend them—though God can neither be surprised nor besieged; for long prayers have more of the man, as ambition of eloquence and complacence in the work, and more of the devil by after distractions; for after, in the beginning, we have well entreated God to hearken, we speak no more to Him."—*Donne.*

*b S. S. World.*

**5, 6.** (5) **durst . . so,** such a thought, even, the king will punish. (6) **Haman . . queen,** the terror inspired by the prediction of his friends, and increased by the words of Esther and the king, now showed itself, and stamped his guilt.

*Haman.*—Lord Arthur Hervey, in his article on the Book of Esther, in Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*, remarks: "This book is read through by the Jews in their synagogues at the feast of Purim, when it was, and is still in some synagogues, the custom at the mention of Haman's name to hiss and stamp, and clench the fist and cry, 'Let his name be blotted out; may the name of the wicked rot.' It is said also that the names of Haman's ten sons are read in one breath, to signify that they all expired at the same instant of time. Even in writing the names of Haman's sons in the 7th, 8th, and 9th verses of Esth. ix., the Jewish scribes have contrived to express their abhorrence of the race of Haman; for these ten names are written in three perpendicular columns of 3, 3, 4, as if they were hanging upon three parallel cords, three upon each cord, one above another, to represent the hanging of Haman's sons."[a]

Esther charges Haman

When Severus, emperor of Rome, found his end approaching, he cried out, "I have been everything, and everything is nothing." Then, ordering the urn to be brought to him in which his ashes were to be enclosed on his body being burned, he said, "Little urn, thou shalt contain one for whom the world was too little."

*a Stehelin, Rab Lit.* ii 349.

**7—10.** (7) **king . . garden,** to consider what he should do. **Haman . . queen,** he who had doomed the queen herself. **saw . . king,** evil that Esther might avert. (8) **Haman . . was,** in his agony of fear he had fallen on her divan,[a] or couch. **will . . house?** he thinks this man capable of any evil. **they . . face,**[b] they saw that his death was determined upon: and covered his face as one who might not see the king's face again. (9) **Harbonah,**[c] Haman had made himself enemies; here is one who is ready to help on the fall of the great man. **behold . . Mordecai,**[d] the king, not having ordered the death of Mordecai, would see how Haman was taking the law into his own hands.

the death of Haman

*a* i. 6.
*b* Job ix. 24.
*c* i. 10.
*d* v. 14; Ps. vii. 16; Pr. xi. 5, 6.

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who . . king, Harbonah thus insinuates the treachery of Haman. hang . . thereon, the LXX. has *staurothéto, i.e.* let him be crucified. (10) then . . appeased,[e] when, so far, justice had been done.

*Case of retribution.*—Tamerlane the Great, having made war on Bajazet, Emperor of the Turks, overthrew him in battle, and took him prisoner. The victor gave the captive monarch at first a very civil reception; and, entering into familiar conversation with him, said, "Now, king, tell me freely and truly what thou wouldest have done with me, had I fallen into thy power?" Bajazet, who was of a fierce and haughty spirit, is said to have thus replied: "Had the gods given unto me the victory, I would have enclosed thee in an iron cage, and carried thee about with me as a spectacle of derision to the world." Tamerlane wrathfully replied, "Then, proud man, as thou wouldest have done to me, even so shall I do unto thee." A strong iron cage was made, into which the fallen emperor was thrust; and thus exposed like a wild beast, he was carried along in the train of his conqueror. Nearly three years were passed by the once mighty Bajazet in this cruel state of durance; and at last, being told that he must be carried into Tartary, despairing of then obtaining his freedom, he struck his head with such violence against the bars of his cage, as to put an end to his wretched life.[f]

e Ps. xxxvii. 35, 36; Da. vi. 24. r. 9. *J. Clapp*, ii. 69.

There is no vice more insupportable and more universally hated than pride. It is a kind of poison, which corrupts all the good qualities of a man; and whatever merit he may otherwise possess, this single fault is sufficient to render him odious and contemptible; so that by pleasing himself too much, he displeases every one.

*f Dr. Cheever.*

## *CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.*

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**Mordecai exalted**

1, 2. (1) Mordecai . . king, *etc.*,[a] honoured as the saviour of his life before, and now as the relative of his queen. ring,[b] his signet ring, badge of office. Esther . . Haman, so he was rewarded for his care of the poor orphan.

*Signet rings.*—On the little finger of the right hand is worn a seal-ring, which is generally of silver, with a cornelian, or other stone, upon which is engraved the wearer's name: the name is accompanied by the words, "His servant" (signifying, the servant, or worshipper of God), and often by other words expressive of the person's trust in God, etc. The seal-ring is used for signing letters and other writings, and its impression is considered more valid than the sign-manual. (Therefore, giving the ring to another person is the utmost sign of confidence.) A little ink is dabbed upon it with one of the fingers, and it is pressed upon the paper; the person who uses it having first touched his tongue with another finger and moistened the place in the paper which is to be stamped. Almost every person who can afford it has a seal-ring, even though he be a servant.[c]

a ii. 7.

b iii. 10.

v. 2. *J. Saurin, Disc. Hist.* vii. 1.

"The giving riches and honours to a wicked man, is like giving strong wine to him that hath a fever." — *Plutarch.*

c *Lane, Mod. Egy.*

**Esther prays for the life of her people**

3—6. (3) spake . . king, *etc.*, her task not completed till she had saved her people. (4) king . . Esther,[a] a sign that she and her request were accepted. (5) if, *etc.*, note her various pleas. reverse, *lit.* bring back. (6) for . . see, *etc.*,[b] she pleads for mercy on the ground of her love for her people; her strength as a suppliant lies in the king's love for her.

*A queen interceding for her people.*—When Edward III. took Calais, he consented to spare the place on condition that six of the principal citizens should surrender themselves for execution; and would have forgot his humanity but for his queen, who threw herself at his feet, implored him, and obtained the lives of

a iv. 11, v. 2.

b vii. 4; Ne. ii. 3.

"It is a solemn address of our blessed Saviour to God the Father in our behalf, wherein by presenting to Him

the noble victims who had offered themselves to save the lives of their fellow-citizens, their friends, their relatives, their wives, their children.—*The Intercessor a Care-taker.*—If you accept an interceding Christ as the surety that there is in heaven living piety, sympathy, thought, superintendence, Divine providence, unfailing love and remembrance—in short, grace to help in time of need, so that you shall not be left to your own wisdom in selecting the thing most needed in spiritual development (like a man that, being sick, should be put into an apothecary's shop, and left to pick out his own medicines), but that there is a Physician, a Mediator, an Intercessor, a Care-taker, who undertakes to do for you all the things that you need to have done, whatever they may be—things that you do not know enough of to do for yourself, whether your not knowing arises from your sinfulness, or from the limitation of your faculties, or from your imperfect knowledge; and that your highest interests will be attended to, not by your own circumscribed empirical knowledge, but by One whose life, I had almost said, is Divinely professional for that purpose—then in the faith of such an intercessorship of Christ you will have comfort of believing, consolation in trouble, joy and peace for the present time, and hope for the time to come.[c]

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His own sacrificed body, and by continuing and perpetuating the presentation of it, He doth effectually move and solicit Him graciously to receive and accept our prayer, and to empower Him to bestow on us all those graces and favours which, in consideration of His sacrifice, God hath promised us."—*J. Scott.*

c *H. W. Beecher*

**7, 8.** (7) **him . . Jews,**[a] hence the great difficulty was removed, and the king's will made apparent. (8) **for . . reverse,**[b] hence they could not repeal the decree, but provide an antidote.

*The stability of God's Word.*—I. The Bible addresses itself to men in the name of the Sovereign of all worlds, and claims to be written in the King's name. II. The Bible appears to us bearing certain attestations of its veracity and genuineness, sealed with the King's ring. III. In all ages there have been those who would have been glad to reverse its sacred teachings; but though for a time its foes may seem to have succeeded, the King's writing outlives all their attempts. IV. It is not enough to give it the consent of our minds; it demands the subjection of our lives. V. It will be found to have been a dreadful crime, fatal in its consequences, to deny, despise, or neglect this gracious, sacred, life-giving Word.

*Trust in God.*—Several German princes were once extolling the glory of their realms. One boasted of his excellent vineyards; another of his hunting grounds; another of his mines. At last, Abelard, Duke of Wurtemburg, took up the subject and said: "I own that I am a poor prince, and can vie with none of these things; nevertheless, I too, possess a noble jewel in my dominion; for were I to be without attendants, either in the open country or the wild forests, I could ask the first of my subjects whom I met to stretch himself upon the ground, and confidently place myself upon his bosom, and fall asleep without the slightest apprehension of injury." Was not this a precious jewel for a prince? I, however, have something better, for I can rest my head and my heart in the lap of God's providence, and upon the bosom of Jesus Christ, with a perfect assurance that neither man nor devil can touch me there.[c]

**the king orders letters to be written**

a Pr. xxii. 32.

b i. 19; Da. vi. 8, 12, 15.

As rowers in a boat turn their backs to the shore, and trust to the man at the helm, whose eye is fixed upon it; so should we proceed in duty through life,—turn our back from our anxious cares for the future, and leave the guidance of them all to God, who guides the helm."—*Bowes.*

"Honour's a good brooch to wear in a man's hat at all times."—*Ben Jonson.*

c *Gotthold.*

**9—11.** (9) **scribes,**[a] secretaries. **lieutenants,** satraps. **deputies,** viceroys, governors. (10) **posts,** messengers, couriers. **mules,** or prob. fleet horses. **young dromedaries,** rather thoroughbred horses; or mules, the sons of mares, a superior breed, famous for speed. (11) **wherein . . life,** thus the force

**by royal letters the Jews are permitted to stand for their defence**

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of the great decree was broken. The Jews were allowed to act on the defensive.

*Sealing letters.*—"The authenticity of a merchant's letters, as of his bills, depends entirely upon the seal. It is not usual to sign either; and they are not often written in the hand of the person who sends them: so that it is the seal which is of importance. Engraven upon it is the name and title, if he has one, of the person it belongs to, and the date when it was cut. The occupation of seal-cutter is one of much trust and some danger: he keeps a register of every seal he makes, and if one is stolen or lost by the party to whom he sold it, his life would answer for the crime of making another exactly the same. The person to whom it belongs, if in business, is obliged to take the two most respectable witnesses of the occurrence, and to write to his correspondents, declaring all accounts and business with his former seal null from the day upon which it was lost."[b]

**12—14.** (12) **upon one day,** the day when the first decree would take effect.[a] (13) **that . . enemies,** hence the expedition used that the Jews might have time to prepare. (14) **decree . . palace,** that its authority might be unquestioned.

*God a refuge.*—During the Irish rebellion of 1798, the "Welsh Horse" were the most dreaded by the inhabitants of the island of any in the whole force of British invaders. One day, a company of these troops, riding through the town of Shorey, suddenly surrounded a church where a congregation had assembled. One frightened cry, "The Welsh Horse!" "The Welsh Horse!" ran from lip to lip, and started every one to his feet; but there was no possibility of escape. The captain dismounted, and marched into the midst of the unarmed assembly. As he strode up the aisle, an old man, one of the few who retained proper presence of mind, called on the minister to pray. The minister, Mr. Thomas Campbell, standing in his pulpit, repeated in a strong clear voice the forty-sixth Psalm: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed. . . . The Lord of Hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah." Struck with a strong awe, the trooper captain stopped in the aisle. He stood still and listened to the end. Then, to the astonishment of all, he bowed, and, turning abruptly about, walked out of the door. The next instant, the whole company were galloping away as rapidly as they had come."[b]

**15—17.** (15) **apparel,** inner robe. **white,** fine linen. **garment,** mantle. **city . . glad,**[a] a hint of the popular respect for Mordecai. (16) **Jews,** *etc.*,[b] content to be permitted to defend their lives. (17) **many . . Jews,**[c] it was seen that the strength of right and justice was with them. **for . . them,**[d] they saw their numbers, their preparations, their holy confidence: and Esther and Mordecai high in royal favour.

*A house of joy.*—

I see a forest, dark, dim, deep, and dread,
Whose solemn shades no human foot or eye
Can penetrate; but now, oh, see! a veil
Falls from my strengthened eyes; and now
Even in its deepest centre I behold
A spot more beautiful than human heart
Can comprehend; it is the home of joy;

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*a* iii. 12.

*v.* 10. *J Dieteric, Ant.* 401.

"Trust in the Lord, and keep your powder dry."—*Cromwell.*

"The curious, questioning eye, that plucks the heart of every mystery."—*Melen.*

*b Perkins, Res. in Persia.*

**the letters are despatched with all haste**

*a* iii. 13.

"Do thy part with industry, and leave the event with God. I have seen matters fall out so unexpectedly, that they have taught me, in all affairs, neither to despair nor to presume; not to despair, for God can help me; not to presume, for God can cross me. I will never despair, because I have a God; I will never presume because I am but a man."—*Feltham.*

*b S. S. World.*

**the joy of the Jews**

*a* iii. 15; Pr. xxix. 2.

*b* Ps. xcvii. 11.

*c* Ps. xviii. 43.

*d* Gen. xxxv. 5; Ex. xv. 16; De. ii. 25, xi. 25.

"There are joys which long to be ours. God sends ten thousand truths, which come about us like birds seek-

And there the blessed spirit broods for ever,
Making her dwelling-place a heaven; there
The skies are pure as crystal, and the eye
Looks through their clear expanse direct to God.
No sun is there; the air itself is light
And life; a rainbow spans it like a crown
Of tearless glory, and the forest trees
Sweep round it in a belt of living green.
Colour, that wayward sprite of changeful mien,
Is here subdued to an intensity
Of burning lustre. Sound has but one voice,
And that is joyous song; sight but one object,
And that is happiness; mine eyes are strained
To catch the lineaments of the bright queen
Whose dwelling-place I see; but 'tis in vain;
Nowhere distinct, yet felt in all, she glides,
A shape of light and colour, through the air,
Making its pure transparency to thrill
With the soft music of her viewless step.[e]

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ing inlet; but we are shut up to them, and so they bring us nothing, but sit and sing awhile upon the roof, and then fly away."—*Beecher.*

"No joys are always sweet, and flourish long, but such as have self-approbation for their root, and the Divine favour for their shelter."—*Dr. Young.*

[e] *Reddal.*

## *CHAPTER THE NINTH.*

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### the Jews prepare for their defence

**1, 2.** (1) **now,** *etc.*,[a] iii. 13. (2) **Jews . . together,** *etc.*,[b] acting on the defensive, they were everywhere victorious.

*Are you ready?*—The Rev. Dr. Kidd was a Scotch minister of some prominence, and very eccentric, and one who had his own way of doing things. One of his parishioners says: "I was busy in my shop, when in the midst of my work in stepped the doctor. 'Did you expect me?' was his abrupt inquiry, without even waiting for a salutation. 'No,' was my reply. 'What if it had been death?' asked he, when at once he stepped out as abruptly as he came, and was gone almost before I knew it." What a question! What a thought for every one of us! Does not death come to most, if not all, as unexpectedly as this? And does not the inquiry impress the lesson from our Saviour's lips, "Be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh."[c]

[a] viii. 12.
[b] viii. 11; Ps. lxxi. 13, 24.
"What a folly it is to dread the thought of throwing away life at once, and yet have no regard to throwing it away piecemeal."—*J. Howe.*
[c] *S. S. World.*

### the Jews smite their enemies

**3—5.** (3) **rulers,** *etc.*, viii. 9. **helped . . them,** they considered it best policy to aid the countrymen of the chief minister of state. (4) **for . . greater,**[a] *lit.* marching and great. His influence was progressive. (5) **did . . would,** *lit.* according to their will.

*Pressing forward.*—Brave soldiers die with their face to the foe. Looking back never conquered a city, nor achieved a work of art, nor wrote a book, nor amassed a fortune. The silent inward cry of the world's great men has ever been: On, my soul, right on. Contentment with the past is to strike your flag and spike your guns. So with the Christian. The word is, Speak unto the Israelites, that they may go forward. Looking backward with complacency is spiritual death. Looking forward with the calm resolve that the future must be and shall be better than the past, that past mistakes and past sins shall be teachers and helps to future wisdom—this gives inspiration, and this means victory. We are saved by hope. It is when we turn

[a] 2 Sa. iii. 1, 1 Ch. iii. 9; Pr. iv. 18.
"Liberty consists in the power of doing that which is permitted by the law."—*Cicero.*
"True liberty consists in the privilege of enjoying our own rights, not in the destruction of the rights of others."—*Pinckard.*

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**the slaughter in Shushan**

*a* v. 11; Job xviii. 19. xxvii. 13—15; Ps. xxi. 10.

*b* viii. 11.

"The sands are number'd, that make up my life; here must I stay, and here my life must end." — *Shakespeare.*

*c Townson.*

**the Jews in Shushan to defend themselves a second day**

*a* v. 6, vii. 2.

*b* vi i. 11.

*c* 2 Sa. xxi. 6—9.

"The word liberty has been falsely used by persons who, being degenerately profligate in private life and mischievous in public, had no hope left but in fomenting discord."—*Tacitus.*

"Spiritual liberty consists in freedom from the curse of the moral law; from the servitude of the ritual; from the love, power, and guilt of sin; from the dominion of Satan; from the corruption of the world; from the fear of death and the wrath to come."—*C. Buck. d B. W. Procter.*

**the slaughter in the provinces**

"To do what we will is natural liberty: to do what we will consistently with the interests of the community to which we belong is civil liberty."—*Blackstone.*

our faces resolutely toward the end of our journey, that they are touched with celestial light and we breath the eternal airs.

**6—11.** (6) **and . . palace,** that is in the royal quarter of the city. (7—10) **the . . Haman,**[a] who to avenge their father were prob. foremost of the attacking party. **but . . hand,** though permitted by the decree to do so.[b] (11) **number . . king,** who seems surprised at the result of the conflict.

*Life guarded by God.*—Our passage through life is like that of the children of Israel through the Red Sea. Doubt and darkness are before us, unless God enlighten our path: the enemy presseth upon us behind, unless God check his pursuit: the waters stand in heaps on each hand of us; if they open a path to us, it is through the word of His power, which were He to recall, the water-flood stands ready to overflow us, the deep to swallow us up, the pit to shut her mouth upon us. Amidst perils, which thus encompass us round on every side, what continual need have we to look up to the Almighty for aid and support![c]

**12—14.** (12) **men,** *see* also *v.* 15. The Jews had leave to destroy the children. **now what,** *etc.*,[a] note the confidence of the king in Esther's judgment. (13) **granted . . decree,**[b] *i.e.* to defend themselves if again attacked; this she saw was likely to result fr. exasperation of the Jews' enemies. **let . . gallows,**[c] as a warning to unrighteous plotters; and to avoid further bloodshed by this sight of their slain leaders. (14) **and . . done,** he saw the wise policy of this request, wh. extended only to Shushan where the great danger lay.

*Life.*—

We are born; we laugh; we weep;
We love; we droop; we die!
Ah! wherefore do we laugh or weep?
Why do we live or die?
Who knows that secret deep?
Alas! not I.

Why doth the violet spring
Unseen by human eye?
Why do the radiant seasons bring
Sweet thoughts that quickly fly!
Why do our fond hearts cling
To things that die?

We toil through pain and wrong;
We fight—and fly;
We love; we lose; and then, ere long,
Stone-dead we lie.
A life! is all thy song:
"Endure and—die!"[d]

**15, 16.** (15) **for,** *etc.*, so Esther's anticipations were verified; the Jews were again attacked by those who thought their liberty of defence was but for a day. (16) **but . . Jews,** *etc.*, this was on the 13th day of the month. The decree was not renewed fr. the 14th. It could not be as there was no time to promulgate it. **laid . . prey,** thus showing their forbearance, and that though they were captives and poor, they only sought to defend their lives.

*Ready for life.*—Before the battle of Hatcher's Run, a Christian soldier said to his comrade, "You are detailed to go to the

front, while I am to remain with the baggage. Let us change places. I'll go front: you remain in camp." "What for?" said the comrade. "Because I am prepared to die, I think; but you are not." The exchange was made. The thought of the self-sacrifice of his friend, and his readiness for the exposures of life or the realities of death, led the unsaved soldier to repentance and a like preparation for life.

**17—19.** (17) **fourteenth . . gladness,** while their countrymen in Shushan were still fighting for their lives. (18) **fifteenth . . gladness,** their enemies not daring to renew the attack. (19) **sending . . another,**[a] mutual congratulations in the form of presents.

*Bright moments.*—Once when I crossed the sea, for four or five days we were unable to get a glimpse of the stars, and were without an observation. We were running straight for the Newfoundland Banks, and were extremely anxious to learn our whereabouts. One evening just enough of the clouds lifted to show through the rift a few stars. Our captain, who seemed to be on the alert, was instantly on the spot to take his observation; and he had hardly time to take it before the clouds shut. But he had got it, and the stars could not get it back. It was enough! That glimpse of heaven told him where he was on the earth! The clouds shut down again, but it could not rub out his calculations. There is many a time, while making your voyage on the ocean of life, that a star shines out. It is visible only a moment; but if you make haste you can catch an observation, and then you will know just were you are, and you can sail on with trust in God, and with the guidance of that silent monitor that points the invisible way. Then take these hours of vision, thank God for them, and use them.[b]—*The true character of joy.*—The passion of joy was not that which now often usurps his name; that trivial, vanishing, superficial thing, that only gilds the apprehension, and plays upon the surface of the soul. It was not the mere crackling of thorns, a sudden blaze of the spirits, the exultation of a tickled fancy, or a pleased appetite. Joy was then a masculine and a severe thing; the recreation of the judgment, the jubilee of reason. It was the result of a real good, suitably applied. It commenced upon the solidities of truth, and the substance of fruition. It did not run out in voice, or undecent eruptions; but filled the soul, as God does the universe, silently, and without noise. It was refreshing, but composed; like the pleasantness of youth tempered with the gravity of age: or the mirth of a festival managed with the silence of contemplation.[b]

**20—22.** (20) **and . . things,** these decrees, and the letters following, to his countrymen. (21) **fourteenth . . fifteenth,** those in the provinces were to rejoice with their brethren in the city whose two days' struggle for life was to be of common interest. (22) **gifts . . poor,**[a] whose defenceless state exposed them to especial danger; and being the larger number had done good service in the struggle by making common cause with the more wealthy. Possibly the poor of the enemy, whose fathers, husbands, etc., had fallen, were not forgotten.

*The suddenness of joy.*—

A thought of joy that rises in the mind,
Where sadness hath been sitting many an hour!

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berty—that is to say, the only liberty to be desired in a state of civil society."—*Paley.*

**the Jews hold a day of feasting**

*a v.* 22; Ne. viii. 10, 12.

*v.* 19. *T. Morer,* 173.

"What is our life without joy? Without joy we can do nothing. We are like an instrument out of tune. An instrument out of tune, it yields but harsh music. Without joy we are a member out of joint. We can do nothing well without joy, and a good conscience, which is the ground of joy."—*Sibbes.*

*b H. W. Beecher.*

"Were my whole life to come one heap of troubles, the pleasures of this moment would suffice, and sweeten all my griefs with its remembrance."—*Lee.*

"Far beneath a soul immortal is a mortal joy."—*Young.*

*b R. South.*

**Mordecai appoints a commemorative festival**

*a* Ps. xxx. 11; Ne. viii. 11.

"Christians, it is your duty not only to be good, but to shine: and, of all the lights which you kindle on the face of joy will reach farthest out to sea, where

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troubled mariners are seeking the shore. Even in your deepest griefs, rejoice in God. As waves phosphoresce, let joys flash from the swing of the sorrows of your souls."—*Beecher.*
*b Calder Campbell.*

A thought of joy, that comes with sudden power,
When least the welcome guest we look to find!
Who sends that thought? Whence springs it?
Like the wind,
Its passage is invisible! The shower
That falls is seen; the lightning o'er the bower
Passes with fiery wing, and leaves behind
Rent boughs and wither'd buds! But air and thought
Come and depart we know not how! Be sure
From heaven the solace is![b]

**the Jews obey Mordecai**

*a* iii. 6, 7.
*b vv.* 13, 14, **vii. 5,** *ff.*, viii. 3, *ff.*
"Covetousness swells the principal to no purpose, and lessens the use to all purposes."—*Jeremy Taylor.*
"If you do not keep pride out of your souls, and your souls out of pride, God will keep your souls out of heaven."—*Dyer.*
*c Smith, Dic. of Bib.*

**23—25.** (23) **Jews . . begun,** *i.e.* in the keeping of the feast they had instituted. (24) **because,** *etc.*,[a] the reason, a deliverance never to be forgotten. **Pur,** iii. 7. (25) **but . . king,**[b] explaining how affairs stood. **letters,** as before related, ref. to second decree, etc.

*The accursed name.*—The Rev. Samuel Clark, writing on the feast of Purim, says:—"The reader [of the Book of Esther in the Jewish synagogue] translates the text, as he goes on, into the vernacular tongue of the place, and makes comments on particular passages. He reads in a histrionic manner, suiting his tones and gestures to the changes in the subject-matter. When he comes to the name of Haman, the whole congregation cry out, 'May his name be blotted out;' or, 'Let the name of the ungodly perish.' At the same time, in some places, the boys who are present make a great noise with their hands, with mallets, and with pieces of wood or stone, on which they have written the name of Haman, and which they rub together so as to obliterate the writing."[c]

**the feast called the feast of Purim**

*a* On the day of the F., the Bk. of Esther is read. The day before the 13th—is called Esther's fast. See *Josephus, Ant.* x. 6. 13; *Buxtorf, Syn. Jud.* cxxix.; *Winer, R. W. B.* ii. 289; *Jahn, Arch.* 358; *Allen, Judaism,* 418.
*b C. Simeon, M.A.* *vv.* 27, 28. *H. Wilkinson* ii. 105; *Bp. Beveridge,* i. 52; *G. Moberly,* 324.
*c H. W. Beecher.*

**26—28.** (26) **Purim,** *see* Intro. **letter,** *v.* 20. (27) **ordained,** *etc.*,[a] incorporated this with the other national feasts. (28) **days . . generation,** as they are, in all lands, to this day.

*The feast of Purim.*—We shall consider—I. The feast itself. 1. The occasion on which it was instituted; 2. The manner of its observance. II. The end and reasons for which it was appointed. It doubtless was designed—1. As a memorial of God's goodness to them; 2. As an incentive to love and serve Him; 3. As an encouragement to trust in God. Address—(1) Those who make a profession of religion; (2) Those who show hostility to the people of God; (3) Those who in the midst of a persecuting world have been preserved.[b]

*Dangers in life.*—I think we ought to buoy for ourselves in our course, as we buoy a harbour. Off this shoal a black buoy floats, and says to those who sail by, as plainly as if it spoke in all languages, "Keep to the right here;" and over against it floats another, and says, "Keep to the left here." Now, in life's ocean, wherever we know the quicksands are, wherever we have once been stranded, let us sink the buoy and anchor of memory, and keep to the right or the left, as the shoal may be.[c]

**the feast of Purim confirmed by Esther**

*a* viii. 10.
*b* **iv. 3, 16**

**29—32.** (29) **Esther . . Purim,**[a] this not a Persian decree, would have force as coming fr. a Jewess in high authority. (30) **words . . truth,** congratulations. (31) **matters . . cry,**[b] not only was the deliverance to be remembered, but also those religious acts by wh. it was preceded. (32) **decree,** *v.* 29. **written . . book,** this Book of Esther.

*A pacific minister.*—George Wishart, one of the first Scottish martyrs at the time of the Reformation, being desired to preach on the Lord's-day in the church of Mauchline, went thither with that design; but the sheriff of Ayr had, in the night time, put a garrison of soldiers into the church to keep him out. Hugh Campbell, of Kinzeancleugh, with others in the parish, were exceedingly offended at this impiety, and would have entered the church by force; but Wishart would not suffer it, saying, "Brethren, it is the word of peace which I preach unto you: the blood of no man shall be shed for it this day. Jesus Christ is as mighty in the fields as in the church, and He Himself, while He lived in the flesh, preached oftener in the desert and on the sea-side, than in the temple of Jerusalem." Upon this the people were appeased, and went with him to the edge of a moor, on the south-west of Mauchline, where, having placed himself upon a mound of earth, he preached to a great multitude. He continued speaking for more than three hours. God working wondrously by him, insomuch that Laurence Ranken, the Laird of Shield, a very profane person, was converted by his discourse. The tears ran from his eyes, to the astonishment of all present; and the whole of his after life witnessed that his profession was without hypocrisy.[c]

B.C. *cir.* 509.

*v.* 31. *Bp. Andrewes*, iv. 385.

"He that takes his full liberty in what he may, shall repent him: how much more in what he should not? I never read of a Christian that repented him of too little worldly delight. The surest course I have still found in all earthly pleasures, is to rise with an appetite, and to be satisfied with a little."—*Bishop Hall.*

c *Dr. Cheever.*

## *CHAPTER THE TENTH.*

B.C. *cir.* 495.

**the advancement and policy of Mordecai**

**1—3.** (1) **tribute,** to replenish his exchequer; perh. to provide means to repel the Greek invasion under Cimon.[a] **land . . see,** either all his dominions, or those especially threatened. (2) **written . . Persia,** when, prob., this Bk. of Esther was extracted. *see* Intro. (3) **next,**[b] as grand vizier, or prime minister. **accepted,** favourably regarded, as their leading and representative man. **seeking . . people,**[c] by his influence making their property secure, and their trading safe. **and . . seed,** seeking for them immunity fr. danger.

*Ancient chronicles.*—Many corroborative and illustrative anecdotes might be adduced, not only from the ancient accounts of Persia, but from the usages of other Oriental nations. Two or three of the shortest will suffice for our present purpose. Herodotus, in describing the review made by Xerxes of his vast army, states that he was attended by secretaries, who wrote down the answers which he received to the various questions which he put as he rode along the ranks in his chariot (vii. 100). The same historian represents this monarch as seated on Mount Ægaleos, to view the battle of Salamis, and whenever he saw any one of his own people displaying peculiar valour in the fight he inquired about him, and the secretaries in attendance made a note of the answer, which usually specified the name and city of the person whose deed had attracted the royal notice (viii. 90). There is no very distinct notice of the attendance of secretaries at the royal feasts; they seem rather to have been called when anything occurred for them to record—at least, at the private meals of the king; but it appears that they attended at public feasts. The travellers of the middle age, in their ampler descriptions of the state of the Mongol emperor, tell us that when he dined four secretaries were seated under his table to write down his words—

a B.C. 470—469. See *Diod. Sic.* xi. 60—62; *Plutarch, Vit. Cimon; Prideaux, Conn.* B.C. 470.

b Ge. xli. 40; 2 Ch. xxviii. 7.

c Ne. ii. 10; Ps. cxxii. 8, 9.

"This is a great fault in a chronologer, to turn parasite; an absolute historian should be in fear of none; neither should he write anything more than truth, for friendship, or else for hate; but keep himself equal and constant in all his discourses."—*Linyua.*

*Esther's tomb.*—"On passing through the little portal, wh.

B.C. *cir.* 495.

which he might never revoke (Ranking's *Historical Researches*, p. 75). As the king's word was also an unalterable law among the Medes and Persians, we may infer a similar usage. These facts serve to illustrate the mode in which materials were collected. Perhaps the final preparation was not unlike that in Abyssinia, as described by Bruce:—The king has near his person an officer who is meant to be his historiographer; he is also keeper of his seal, and is obliged to make a journal of the king's actions, good and bad, without comment of his own upon them. This, when the king dies, or at least soon after, is delivered to the council, who read it over, and erase everything false in it, whilst they supply every material fact which may have been omitted, whether purposely or not. Bruce's editor (Dr. A Murray) observes that the "complete chronicle of a reign, written by the king's historiographer, contains all the remarkable transactions at court during every day in the month throughout the whole year."—*The tomb of Esther and Mordecai.*—Sir John Malcolm tells us that the sepulchre of Esther and Mordecai stands near the centre of the city of Hamadan. It is a square building, terminated by a dome, with an inscription in Hebrew upon it, translated and sent to him by Sir Gore Ouseley, late ambassador to the court of Persia. It is as follows: "Thursday, fifteenth of the month Adar, in the year 4474 from the creation of the world, was finished the building of this temple over the graves of Mordecai and Esther by the hands of the good-hearted brothers, Elias and Samuel, the sons of the deceased Ishmael of Kashan." This tomb is regarded by all the Jews who yet exist in the empire as a place of particular sanctity; and pilgrimages are still made to it at certain seasons of the year, in the same spirit of holy penitence with which, in former times, they turned their eyes towards Jerusalem. Being desirous of visiting a place which Christians cannot view without reverence, I sent to request that favour of the priest under whose care it is preserved. He came to me immediately on my message, and seemed pleased with the respect manifested towards the ancient people of his nation, in the manner with which I asked to be admitted to their shrine. I accompanied the priest through the town, over much ruin and rubbish, to an enclosed piece of ground, rather more elevated than any in its immediate vicinity. In the centre was the Jewish tomb; a square building of brick, of a mosque-like form, with a rather elongated dome at the top; the whole seems in a very decaying state; falling fast to the mouldered condition of some wall-fragments around, which, in former times, had been connected with, and extended the consequence of the sacred enclosure. The door that admitted us into the tomb is, in the ancient sepulchral fashion of the country, very small; consisting of a single stone of great thickness, and turning on its own pivots from one side. Its key is always in possession of the head of the Jews resident at Hamadan: and doubtless has been so preserved, from the time of the holy pair's interment, when the grateful sons of the captivity, whose lives they had rescued from universal massacre, first erected a monument over the remains of their benefactors, and obeyed the ordinance of gratitude, in making the anniversary of their preservation a lasting memorial of heaven's mercy, and the just faith of Esther and Mordecai.[e]

we did in an almost doubled position, we entered a small arched chamber, in which are seen the graves of several rabbis. Having trod lightly by their graves, a second door of such very confined dimensions presented itself at the end of this vestibule, that we were constrained to enter it on our hands and knees, and then, standing up, we found ourselves in a larger chamber, to which appertained the dome. Immediately under its concave, stand two sarcophagi, made of a very dark wood carved with great intricacy of pattern, and richness of twisted ornament, with a line of inscription in Hebrew, running round the upper ledge of each. Many other inscriptions, in the same language, are cut on the walls, while one of the oldest antiquity, engraved on a slab of white marble, is let into the wall itself. The priest assured me it had been rescued from the ruins of the first edifice, at its demolition by the Tartars; and, with the sarcophagi themselves, was preserved on the same consecrated spot."—*Sir R. K. Porter.*

*r. Kitto.*

*Sir R. K. Porter.*

# THE BOOK OF JOB.

# Introduction.

**I. Title.** So called fr. name of the patriarch whose life and experience it narrates. **II. Author.** Opinion much divided. Some (as *Lightfoot*, fr. erroneous version of xxxii. 16, 17) say Elihu; some (*Ilgen*) a descendant of Elihu; some (as *Luther*, *Grotius*, and *Doederlein*), Solomon; and some (as *Huet*, *Kennicott*, *Heath*, *Bp. Warburton*, and *Dr. Good*) say Moses. This is the more generally received view; but see *Abp. Magee* (*Dis. on Atonement*, ii. 63—80). In opp. to this theory (1) characters of antiq. place the bk. many cents. bef. time of Moses. (2) There is total absence of any allusion to manners, customs, and hist. of Israel. (3) The style of Job (as observed by *Bp. Lowth*) is very dif. fr. poetical style of Moses. Some eminent authorities (*Schultens*, *Peters*, *Dr. Hales*, *Bp. Tomline*, *Bp. Lowth*) suppose it to have been written by Job himself, or a contemporary. **III. Time.** The period in wh. Job lived has occasioned much discussion. Prob. this was earlier than Abraham. If so, this bk. may be read betw. caps. xi. and xii. of Gen. Several things strengthen this view. (1) The long life of Job,—200 yrs. (2) Absence of all ref. to Israelitish affairs. (3) No ref. to destr. of cities of the plain, of wh. Job, had he lived after that event, must have heard. (4) Only one form of idolatry, and that the most anc., the worship of heavenly bodies, is mentioned,—xxxi. 26—28. (5) Manners and customs are those of anc. patriarchs. (6) Job's religion is like that of the patriarchs, one of sacrifices without priests, etc. (7) *Dr. Hales* uses an argument founded on astronomy—on ix. 9, and xxxviii. 31, 32—to show that the time of the bk. is B.C. 2130 or ab. 184 yrs. bef. birth of Abraham. **IV. Style.** Poetical (*see* note on i. 1). Even "the very existence of Job as a real person has been questioned, but without reason. He is classed in the O. T. (Ez. xiv. 14) with Noah and Dan.; and alluded to in the N. T. (Ja. v. 11) in terms wh. forbid the supposition of the history being mythical. We have no reason to doubt that, in the main, the narrative is one of facts."—(*Litton*). **V. Scope.** The precise object much controverted. Mercenary selfishness, charged against Job (i.), is disproved in the end. Job believes that what God does is right; and resolves to trust Him (xix. 23—26). Thus the nature of real faith, and true piety, in every age are illustrated. The providence of God in its inscrutableness and mercy, and the glory of the Divine attributes, are set forth in unrivalled magnificence. "It also illus. human depravity (xxxiii. 8, 9, xxxiv. 5, 9, 35), exhibits faith in a coming Redeemer and a future life (xix. 25—28), speaks of sacrifice as the appointed means of acceptance (i. 5, xlii. 9, xxxiii. 23—28), and shows the benefit of intercessory prayer (xlii. 8, 9). Not all, of course, that even Job said in these discussions, is to be commended. The principles advanced are sometimes erroneous, and sometimes also the conclusions. Inspiration describes accurately what was said or done, without necessarily sanctioning either."—*Angus.*

# Synopsis.

*(According to Noyes.)*

I.—**Historical introduction** (*prose*)..i., ii.

II.—**Controversy in verse** .....iii.—xlii. 7

1. *First series.*

(*a*) Speech of Eliphaz.....iv., v.
(*b*) Answer of Job.....vi., vii.
(*c*) Speech of Bildad .....viii.
(*d*) Answer of Job .....ix., x.
(*e*) Speech of Zophar .....xi.
(*f*) Answer of Job.....xii., xiii., xiv.

2. *Second series.*

(*a*) Speech of Eliphaz.....xv.
(*b*) Answer of Job.....xvi., xvii.
(*c*) Speech of Bildad .....xviii.
(*d*) Answer of Job .....xix.
(*e*) Speech of Zophar .....xx.
(*f*) Answer of Job .....xxi.

3. *Third series.*

(*a*) Speech of Eliphaz .....xxii.
(*b*) Answer of Job.....xxiii., xxiv.
(*c*) Speech of Bildad.....xxv.
(*d*) Answer of Job .....xxvi.—xxxi.

4. The judgment of Elihu.....xxxii.—xxxvii.

5. The speech of the Deity...xxxviii.—xlii. 7

III.—**The conclusion** (*prose*)...lii. 7 to end.

*(According to Horne.)*

PART I.—**Exordium.**

*Sect.* 1. Job's circumstances .....i. 1—6
*Sect.* 2. First trial.....i. 7—22
*Sect.* 3. Second trial.....ii. 1—10

PART II.—**First dialogue** .....iii.—xiv.

*Sect.* 1. Job's complaint .....iii.
*Sect.* 2. Speech of Eliphaz.....iv., v.
*Sect.* 3. Job's reply.....vi., vii.
*Sect.* 4. Bildad's argument .....viii.
*Sect.* 5. Job's rejoinder .....ix., x.
*Sect.* 6. Zophar's exhortation.....xi.
*Sect.* 7. Job's retort .....xii.—xiv.

PART III.—**Second dialogue.**

*Sect.* 1. Eliphaz's accusation .....xv
*Sect.* 2. Job's reply .....xvi., xvii.
*Sect.* 3. Bildad recapitulates .....xviii.
*Sect.* 4. Job's appeal .....xix.
*Sect.* 5. Zophar and Job .....xx., xxi.

PART IV.—**Third dialogue.**

*Sect.* 1. Eliphaz resumes .....xxii.
*Sect.* 2. Job replies .....xxiii., xxiv.
*Sect.* 3. Bildad rejoins .....xxv.
*Sect.* 4. Job answers .....xxvi.—xxxi.

PART V.—**Elihu's summary**.....xxxii.—xxxvii.

PART VI.—**Conclusion.**

*Sect.* 1. Jehovah's judgment.....xxxvii.—xli.
*Sect.* 2. Job's submission .....xlii. 1—10
*Sect.* 3. Job's restoration, etc.*.....xlii. 11—17

* Dr. Hales is of opinion that the last six verses (which particularise the increase of Job's family, the names of his daughters, who, acc. to primitive usage, were made co-heiresses with their brothers, together with the number of years during wh. he survived his trial) form an appendix, wh. was prob. added in later times fr. tradition, either by Moses, who resided so long in his neighbourhood, or by Samuel, or by the person (whoever he was) that introduced the book into the sacred canon (*See Hales' Analysis of Chronology*, vol. ii. bk. i. p. 101).

B.C. *cir.* 1520.

## CHAPTER THE FIRST.

**Job's prosperity**

*a* The mention of his name and place where he lived, shows that the writer meant to affirm that there was in fact such a man."—*Barnes.*

*b Kalisch, Com. on Gen.* 285—6. See also appendix to *Delitzsch*, ii. The LXX. has Ausitis in place of Uz, and *Ptolemy* (v. 19) speaks of a tribe Æsitæ in N. part of desert of Arabia, near the Euphrates.

*c* Primary meaning, acc. to *Gesenius*, is puffing at one, as in anger or scorn.

*v.* 1. *J. Ely, Wint. Lect.* 57.

"An old man once said, When I was young I was poor; when old I became rich; but in each condition I found disappointment. When the faculties of enjoyment were, I had not the means; when the means came, the faculties were gone."—*Anon.*

*d T. Carlyle.*

**Job's piety**

*a Dr. Good; Tindal.*

*b* The same word is used for *bless*, as here for *curse*. Dr. Good thinks it should always be trans. *bless*. But this would be dif. in such pass. as 1 Ki. xxi. 10.

*vv.* 4, 5. *H. Smith,*

**1—3.** (1) **there . . man,**[a] not a poetic or imaginary person. **Uz,**[b] locality much debated. Prob. betw. Idumæa and the Euphrates. The word prob. sig. *fertile land.* **Job,** *i.e.* one persecuted.[c] **perfect,** his moral character was proportionate, and complete in all its parts. (2) **born . . daughters,** names not given. The Chaldee says the name of his wife was Dinah. (3) **substance,** or cattle. **was . . sheep,** large flocks com. in E. **camels,** *Topics*, i. 16. **five . . oxen,** sug. that Job tilled the soil. **five . . asses,** esp. useful for their supply of milk. **household,** following, retainers, tribe. **greatest,** in wealth, influence, honour.

*A good man in great prosperity.*—Here is—I. A good man. 1. In relation to his general conduct, he was upright; 2. In relation to his God, he was devout; 3. In relation to evil, he was an apostate, he eschewed evil; 4. In relation to his family, he was a priest. II. Here is a good man very prosperous. 1. He was prosperous as a father; 2. As a farmer; 3. As a citizen. Learn—(1) That good men in great prosperity is what antecedently we might have expected to find everywhere in the world; (2) That a good man in great prosperity is not a common scene in human life.

*The Book of Job.*—I call that, apart from all theories about it, one of the grandest things ever written with pen. One feels, indeed, as if it were not Hebrew; such a noble universality, different from noble patriotism, or sectarianism, reigns in it. A noble book! all men's book! It is our first, oldest statement of the never-ending problem, man's destiny, and God's ways with him here in this earth. And all in such free flowing outlines; grand in its sincerity, in its simplicity, in its epic melody, and repose of reconcilement. There is the seeing eye, the mildly understanding heart. So true every way; true eyesight and vision for all things; material things no less than spiritual: the horse,—"hast Thou clothed his neck with thunder?"—"he laughs at the shaking of the spear!" Such living likenesses were never since drawn. Sublime sorrow, sublime reconciliation; oldest choral melody, as of the heart of mankind; so soft and great; as the summer midnight, as the world with its seas and stars! There is nothing written, I think, in the Bible or out of it, of equal literary merit.[d]

**4, 5.** (4) **feasted,** banqueted.[a] **every . . day,** ea. in his turn, entertained the rest. **sent . . sisters,** who had no separate house of their own. **to . . them,** the presence of their sisters, and for this purpose. shows that these feasts were not riotous revelries. (5) **when . . about,** when the circle of feasts was finished. **sent . . them,** these social meetings were closed by a religious gathering in Job's house. **have . . hearts,**[b] he had no proof that they had done so. It was possible that in the mirth of the feast they had exceeded the bounds of holiness. **thus . . continually,** seeking pardon for possible as well as known sin, as often as ea circle of feasting was completed.

*Job's anxiety for his children.*—Notice—I. His conduct in relation to his family. Consider his act as—1. One of magisterial authority; 2. Of parental love. The peculiarity of his conduct naturally leads us to inquire into—II. The grounds and reasons of it. It was founded on Job's views—1. Of the extreme depravity of our nature; 2. The corrupt tendency of carnal mirth; 3. The universal need of an atonement. Let us learn from hence—(1) To exercise a jealousy over ourselves; (2) To seek above all things the eternal welfare of our children.[c]

*Parental anxiety.*—The anxiety of George III. for the welfare and health of his children was once exemplified in the following interesting manner:—Soon after the young princes went abroad, he was talking jocosely with a Scottish lady about her native country. On a sudden, she observed that he became absorbed in thought; and, supposing him reflecting on something that had been said in conversation, remarked, "Your majesty, I presume, is thinking of my country." He paused for a few moments, and, dropping a tear, said, "I was entreating God to protect and bless my dear boys."—*Advice to parents.*—Things which parents may inculcate upon themselves and their children, without fear of excess:—1. Neatness and propriety in dress, having reference to occasion and the circumstances of the individual. 2. Politeness; paying due regard to the tastes and feelings of others. 3. Good-humour. 4. Cheerfulness. 5. Justice in respect to the property, character, and feelings of others. 6. Cultivation of the intellect, with a view to the discovery and vindication of truth. 7. Wisdom; the skill to avoid vice and misfortune, and to attain virtue and success. 8. Self-control; the power to restrain oneself from acts of imprudence, vice, and folly; the power to compel oneself to do what is required at the right time, and in the right way. 9. Moral courage; the power to resist fashionable errors; to maintain unpopular truth; to show sympathy, kindness, and humanity toward the unfortunate, the humble and the poor, even where it may threaten momentary contempt. 10. Consistency, without obstinacy. 11. Charity in all its forms. 12. Excellence in the profession or pursuit to which a person devotes himself, accompanied by equity and modesty. Things which parents should repress in themselves and their children:—1. Display of all kinds, in dress, equipage, manners, accomplishments, talents, wit, personal beauty, power and wealth. 2. Great riches, rank, station, office, as instruments of selfish gratification and pride. 3. Exclusiveness, by which persons affect to be of a superior caste. 4. That assumed superiority of taste which displays itself in hypercritical discontent. 5. That pretendedly superior sagacity which imputes bad motives as the source of good actions. 6. That cunning which would make dupes of mankind.[d]

B.C. *cir.* 1520.

401; *C. Wheatley*, i. 1; *Dr. Stennett*, ii. 282.

*v.* 5. *Dr. J. Horton*, 77; *Bp. Sheridan*, i. 265; *Bp. Garnett, Dis. on Job*, 313; *Bp. Behon*, ii. 452; *T. Arnold*, 123.

*c C. Simeon, M.A.*

"I have been thinking of many expressions of Rutherford's this morning, before I was up. I feel one, the burden of the song: 'I lay my head to rest on the bosom of Omnipotence.' While I can keep hold of this, it shall be a fine day, whether it rains, hails, or shines."—*Cecil.*

*Questions for Parents.*—Do you pray for your children earnestly, constantly, believingly? Do you teach your children perseveringly, unweariedly, lovingly? Do you watch your children tenderly, patiently, solemnly? Do you make companions of your children, that they may walk in your ways, as you are walking in the ways of God?

*d S. G. Goodrich.*

**6, 7.** (6) **when .. God,** angels.[a] **came .. Lord,** to give acc. of their ministry.[b] **Satan,** the adversary.[c] One who lies in wait. **came .. them,** forced to come as one in subjection. (7) **Lord .. thou?** a similar question may have been asked of the sons of God. **going .. fro,** *lit.* hurrying rapidly to and fro. **walking .. it,** investigating human affairs.

**the sons of God appear before Him**

*a* xxxviii. 7; 1 Ki. xxii. 19.
*b* He. i. 14.
*c* xxi. 1; Zec. iii. 1; Re. xii 9, 10.
*v.* 6 *St. Augustine, Op.* vii. 72; *T. Blackley*, iii. 206.

*Satan among the angels.*—I. Can we in any way realise the scene? II. Here, then, we have next the Scriptural idea of Satan. The response of the Evil One to his Almighty questioner distinctly expresses—1. Indifference; 2. Unbelief; 3. Cruelty;

B.C. *cir.* 1520.

*c Dr. Thomas.*

"Satan knows what orders thou keepest in thy house and closet; and though he hath not a key to thy heart, yet he can stand in the next room to it and lightly hear what is whispered there. He hunts the Christian by the scent of his own feet, and if once he doth smell which way thy heart inclines, he knows how to take the hint."—*A Divine of the Seventeenth Century.*

*e Dr. Boothroyd.*

"The main care and most officious endeavours of these blessed spirits are employed about the better part, the soul—in the instilling of good motions; enlightening the understanding, repelling of temptations, furthering our opportunities of good, preventing occasions of sin, comforting our sorrows; quickening our dulness, encouraging our weakness: and lastly, after all careful attendance here below, conveying the souls of their charge to their glory, and presenting them to the hands of their faithful Creator."—*Bp. Hall.*

"Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth unseen, both when we sleep and when we wake."—*Milton.*

4. Limitation.—*E. P. Hood.—The foe of foes.*—We have here—1. A figurative representation of the Eternal and His spiritual kingdom; 2. A remarkable meeting of the Great God and some of His intelligent creatures. The passage teaches several things concerning the Evil One. I. That he has a personal existence. 1. This existence is suggested by reason; 2. It is confirmed by human history; 3. It is declared in the Bible. II. That he is an intruder in the sacred presence. III. That he is amenable to the Eternal. This—1. Although he is so great; 2. Although so wicked. IV. That he is a vagrant in the universe. The language implies—1. Homelessness; 2. Zealousness. V. That he is a slanderer of the good. VI. That he is a slave of the Infinite.[d]

*The sons of God before Jehovah.*—To represent the majesty and glory of the Supreme Governor of the world, and the manner in which He administers its affairs, the Holy Scriptures borrow images from what obtains among men. Hence Jehovah is spoken of as sitting upon His throne, attended by the different orders of servants, to whom are allotted various offices in the administration of His providential empire. So Isa. vi. 1; 1 Kings xxii. 19—22. In the same manner the author of the Book of Job represents God as a king, before whom His ministers attend at stated times to give an account of their various services.[e]—*The angels.*—The historical Scriptures relate to us, without any error, the mysterious intervention of angels in the affairs of this world, in those of the Church, and those of heaven. These creatures, ardent and pure, humble and sublime, whose existence the Bible alone has revealed to us—do they not differ from men as much as the heavens differ from the earth? Was anything like unto angels ever conceived by the minds of any race of men, their poets, or their sages? No; their imaginations have not even come near them. People at all times have taken pleasure in painting those invisible beings, inhabitants of celestial regions, adorned with all those superior qualities that charm the heart of man. But how low, puerile, and vulgar are all their conceptions! Study the angels of the Scriptures; not only is everything there grand, holy, and worthy of God; not only is their character at once ardent and sublime, compassionate and majestic, constantly brought before us there by their names, their attributes, their employments, their habitations, their songs, their contemplation of the depths of redemption, and the joys of their love; but what must strike us more than all is the perfect harmony of the whole, that all these features agree, and are maintained in their justest proportions. In a word, this doctrine, sustained from one end of Scripture to the other, bears the most striking testimony to its inspiration from God. While all the mythologies tell us of the inhabitants of the moon and the planets, the Bible does not contain one word about them,—it tells us nothing of the second heaven; but it depicts the inhabitants of the third heaven, or the heaven of heavens. Descriptions of the angels are numerous, without wearying, and full of details. They are exhibited to us in every situation,—in heaven and upon earth, before God and before men, ministers of mercy, and sometimes executors of vengeance; standing before God, adoring Him day and night; but also employed in the service of the humblest believer. We are defiled, they are perfect; we are selfish, they melt with charity; we are haughty, they are gentle; we are vain and proud in bodies that

worms will consume, they are humble in glory and immortality; we are disturbed by passions, they are fervent in spirit,—neither can they die. This uniformity, this purity, comes not from man—it is from God.[f]

B.C. cir. 1520.

*f R. Hall.*

8. **considered,** attentively, *see margin.* **none . . earth,** for virtue and piety. **one . . evil,** ver. i.

*Job's character estimated by God.*—I. God regarded the character of Job. II. God estimated Job as perfect. III. God estimated Job as upright. IV. Job recognised carefully his domestic responsibilities. V. This perfection is alleged of human nature—an upright man. Learn the blessedness of this character. 1. Domestic protection; 2. Business prosperity.[a]

*Your adversary the devil.*—The devil is the most diligent preacher of all others; he is never out of his diocese; you shall never find him unoccupied; he is ever in his parish. He keeps residence at all times; you shall never find him out of the way; call for him when you will, he is ever at home. And his office is to hinder religion, to maintain superstition, to set up idolatry, to teach all kinds of popery. He is ready as can be wished for to set forth his plough, to devise as many ways as can be to deface and obscure God's glory. Where the devil is resident, and has his plough going, there away with books, and up with candles; away with Bibles, away with the light of the Gospel, and up with the light of candles, yea, even at noon-day,—as though man could invent a better way to honour God with, than God Himself hath appointed.[b]

**God's inquiry of Satan concerning Job**

*a J. S. Exell.*

*vv.* 7, 8. *H. Smith,* 411.

Roberts tells us that in India it is said of a man who cannot be injured, "Why attempt to hurt him? is there not a hedge about him?" "You cannot get at the fellow; he has a strong hedge about him."

*b Hugh Latimer.*

9–12. (9) **doth . . nought,** sug. that Job's piety was mercenary. (10) **hast . . him,**[a] raised up protections. **blessed,** caused to prosper. **substance,** property. **is . . land,** overflowing the land like a river rising, and overflowing its banks. (11) **put . . now,**[b] remove the protection, and reduce his property. **he . . face,**[c] openly, publicly. (12) **behold . . power,**[d] had not been till now. Was now, only by permission and for a purpose. **only . . hand,**[e] Job to be left in health and strength of mind, that he might the better understand and feel the greatness of his losses. **so . . Lord,** to gratify his malice, and unintentionally furnish a lesson on the sustaining power of true faith in God.

*Uncharitable judgment reproved.*—We shall consider these words—I. As a base accusation, indignantly to be repelled. 1. How false the accusation in reference to Job, the event proved; 2. Why should the motives of the people of God be called in question? If multitudes of God's people were upright in former ages, why should all who profess themselves His people be counted hypocrites now? II. As an unanswerable truth most gladly to be conceded. 1. They desire above all things the salvation of their souls; 2. They actually obtain from God many present benefits; 3. They look forward to the infinitely richer benefits in the world that is to come. Learn:—(1) Regard not the uncharitable censures of ungodly men; (2) Endeavour in all things to approve yourselves to God[f]—*Job's character estimated by Satan.*—I. This Satanic test of character must be viewed in a twofold aspect. 1. As a subtle scheme suggested by the devil to cause Job's ruin; 2. As a merciful messenger permitted by God to enhance the worth of Job's life. II. This test was severe. III. Satan was defeated and deceived.[g]

*The devil's tactics.*—So long as the devil hath peaceable posses-

**Job is placed under the power of Satan**

*a* Ps. xxxiv. 7.

*b* xix. 21.

*c* Is. viii. 21; Lu. xxii. 31.

*d* 2 Co. xii. 7.

*e* Isa. xxvii. 8; Ps. lxxvi. 10; 1 Co. x. 13.

*v.* 9. *P. Stockdale* 1; *E. Stone,* 109.

*v.* 11. *A. B. Evans, Let. on Job,* 13.

*f C. Simeon, M.A.*

*g J. S. Exell.*

"The raven croaks and flaps his wings above corruption, and riots in luxury on the carcases of the dead; so Satan feeds his infernal appetite upon the corrupt and dead souls of mankind."—*Dr. Guthrie.*

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"Down thither prone in flight he speeds, and through the vast ethereal sky sails between world and world with steady wings, now on the polar winds, then quick with fan winnows the buxom air." — *Milton.*

*h C. Richardson* (1612).

"If two angels were sent from heaven to execute a Divine command, one to conduct an empire and the other to sweep a street in it, they would feel no inclination to change employments." — *John Newton.*

"Angels are bright still, though the brightest fell."— *Shakespeare.*

*i T. Wesley.*

sion of a man's heart, so long he never molesteth him; he willingly obeyeth the devil, and delighteth in his service; and, therefore, what need the devil impugn him? A king never lifteth up his sword against his own loyal subjects; but if once they begin to rebel, then he raiseth a power to subdue them to his obedience. In like manner, so long as men are sworn subjects to the devil he never stirreth against them: but if once, by the grace of God, they begin to rebel against him, and shake off his yoke, then he rageth and laboureth by all means to reduce them to obedience. A dog, though never so fierce, doth not bark at those of the household. So the dogs of hell will never bark at men, so long as they are of the devil's household; but when they are made "citizens with the saints, and of the household of God," then they begin to take on.[h]—*Employment of evil angels.*—They are (remember! so far as God permits) "governors of the world." So that there may be more ground than we are apt to imagine for that strange expression of Satan (Matt. iv. 8, 9) when he showed our Lord "all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them." "All these things will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me." It is a little more particularly expressed in the fourth chapter of St. Luke—"The devil showed unto Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time." (Such an astonishing power is still left in the prince of darkness!) "And the devil said, All this power will I give Thee, and the glory of them; for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will, I give it" (*vv.* 5, 6). They are the rulers of the darkness of this age (so the words are literally translated), of the present state of things, during which the whole world lieth in the wicked one. He is the element of the children of men, only those who fear God being excepted. He and his angels, in connection with, and in subordination to him, dispose all the ignorance, all the error, all the folly, and particularly all the wickedness of men, in such a manner as may hinder most the kingdom of God, and advance most the kingdom of darkness.[i]

### Job's trials

### the cattle destroyed

**13–15.** (13) **day . . house,** the circle of feasts began once more. (14) **oxen,**[a] *etc.*, the work proceeding as usual. **asses,** she-asses. (15) **Sabeans,** some wandering and predatory tribe of Arabs. **fell . . them,** suddenly. **I . . thee,** so ea. of the messengers said. Satan reserved one to bear the crushing intelligence. The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.

*Satan, as a servant of the Infinite, malevolently dealing with Job's circumstances.*—Observe—I. The enthusiasm of his malignity. II. The variety of his agents. He employed—1. Wicked men; 2. Material nature. III. The celerity of his movements. IV. The folly of his calculations. Job worshipped, here we discover—1. His profound sensibility; 2. His exalted philosophy; 3. His religious magnanimity.[b]

*The land of Hamath.*—After wandering for a time among the ruins I discovered a poor gipsy crouching in terror beneath a shattered wall. He was the only living being in Arethusa, and his tale was sad enough. The day before he was rich and happy, the head of a numerous family, and of an attached tribe. Now he was alone and a beggar. The tents of his people had been pitched on the banks of the Orontes, their camels and goats were feeding on the plain. A troop of Anezeh came suddenly upon them and swept them all away—camels, goats, tents, women, children. He

*a* The Chaldee reads:—"The oxen were ploughing, and Lilith, queen of Zamargad, suddenly rushed upon them, and carried them away."

*v.* 13—22. *Dr. T. Lawrie, Lect.* 89.

*b Dr. Thomas.*

"While the slightest inconveniences of the great are magnified into calamities—while tragedy mouths out their sufferings in all the

with his two sons escaped by plunging into the river and swimming across. His sons were on the track of the plunderers, and he was lurking here in the hope of being able during the night to effect the release of his family, and perhaps also to recover his flocks, or a sufficient equivalent. Property is as insecure still on the borders of the Arabian desert as it was in the days of Job.[c]—*Resistless calamity.*—Nugas, the Scythian king, despising the rich presents and ornaments that were sent unto him by the Emperor of Constantinople, asked him that brought them if these things could drive away sorrow, disease, or death. Such are all the riches and glories of this world: they cannot prevent the least calamity, nor make up the want of the least mercy. It is not the crown of gold that can cure the headache, nor the gilded sceptre that can stay the shaking hand, nor the honourable garter that can ease the gout, nor the necklace of pearl that can take away the pain of the teeth; and a bag of gold will form but a hard pillow to rest on. Miserable comforters are they all; only the useful riches of grace give ease and refreshment under all pains and torments whatsoever.[d]

**16. while . . speaking,** Satan loses no time. "He would overwhelm Job with the suddenness and greatness of his calamities." **the . . God,**[a] poet. for great destructive fire. Prob. the lightning is meant.

*Thankfulness in trouble.*—A Christian sailor, who lost one of his legs at the battle of Trafalgar, said that he could very often measure the faith of the people who conversed with him, by the way in which they alluded to his misfortune. Nine out of ten would exclaim, "What a pity that you lost your leg!" and only one in ten, "What a blessing that the other was preserved!" When God comes into the family and takes away one child, instead of complaining because He has taken one, it would be wiser to thank Him that He has left the rest. Or He may crush a man's business, and strip him of all his worldly wealth, and yet leave untouched and uninvaded what is dearer than all—the cradle of his only child. Would it not be nobler for such a man to be thankful for what God left than to murmur for what He took away? "The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away," but He always gives more than He takes away. If God robs a man of his riches He leaves him his health, which is better than riches. If He takes health He leaves wealth. If He takes both He leaves friends. And if He takes all these—house, and home, and worldly goods, God's providence is not yet exhausted, and He can make blessings out of other things which remain. He never strips a man entirely bare. A man may be left a beggar upon the highway, and yet be able to give increasing testimony to God's goodness and grace![b]

**17. Chaldeans,** in time of Job a wandering people fr. the N. and E., as the Sabeans were fr. the S. **made . . bands,** and so attacked simultaneously fr. three points. **fell,**[a] *lit.* rushed. They prob. came as a cloud of horsemen, "spreading out," to surround their prey.

*Homiletic notes.*—I. Draw a distinction between trial and chastisement. II. The uncertain character of earthly things. III. One thing abides for ever—God's presence. IV. He recognised all his trial as coming from God. V. Children have little idea of the deep solicitude of pious parents. VI. Sin always

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strains of eloquence—the miseries of the poor are entirely disregarded; and yet some of the lower ranks of people undergo more real hardships in one day, than those of a more exalted station suffer in their whole lives."—*Goldsmith.*

*c Dr. L. J. Porter.*

*d Spencer*

### the sheep destroyed

*a* Ep. ii. 2.

*v.* 16. *H. Stebbing,* ii. 315.

"The Lord often provideth for His own glory, in bringing light out of darkness, and by the humiliation of His children bringing their greatest exaltation. When Jacob must be blessed, he must first wrestle for it, and when Joseph shall be exalted, he must first be cast into prison."—*S. Smith,* 1588.

"The true way of softening one's troubles is to solace those of others"—*Madame de Maintenon.*

*b H. W. Beecher.*

### the camels taken

*a* The word here used is spoken of hostile troops, 1 Ch. xiv. 9, 13; of locusts spreading over a country, Nah. iii. 16; of a marauding army, Jud. ix. 33, 44; 1 Sa. xxvii. 8.

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"'Tis only from the belief of the goodness and wisdom of a Supreme Being, that our calamities can be borne in that manner which becomes a man."—*Mackenzie.*

*b Dr. Cheever.*

"Times of general calamity and confusion have ever been productive of the greatest minds. The purest ore is produced from the hottest furnace, and the brightest thunderbolt is elicited from the darkest storm."—*C. Colton.*

*c Cawdray.*

exposes to danger. VII. Satan a liar. He said Job would curse God.

*A chain of calamities.*—A Christian whom God had prospered in his outward estate, and who lived in ease and plenty on his farm, suffered the world to encroach so much upon his affections as sensibly to diminish the ardour of his piety. The disease was dangerous, and the Lord adopted severe measures for its cure. First, his wife was removed by death; but he still remained worldly-minded. Then a beloved son; but, although the remedy operated favourably, it did not effect a cure. Then his crops failed and his cattle died; still his grasp on the world was not unloosed. Then God touched his person, and brought on him a lingering, fatal disease; the world, however, occupied still too much of his thoughts His house finally took fire; and as he was carried out of the burning building he exclaimed, "Blessed be God, I am cured at last." He shortly after died, happy in the anticipation of a heavenly inheritance.[b]—*Extent of calamity.*—Like as lightnings do smite whatsoever they find in the earth except the laurel tree, as Pliny affirmeth, even so great calamity is able to take away and to overthrow whatsoever is in man, or that he hath, save only constant virtue; for constant virtue is a goodly laurel tree, ever flourishing and green, and will not be consumed, burned up, nor destroyed with any fire that breaketh out of the clouds, be it never so fierce, nor with any violence of torments and troubles whatsoever.[c]

**Job's children killed**

*vv.* 18—22. *Dr. S. Eaton*, 26.

*a A. Barnes.*

"It is, to a Christian consideration, one of God's greatest mercies, that this world is full of troubles; for, if we so much court her now she is foul, what would we do if she were beautiful? if we take such pains to gather thorns and thistles, what would we do for figs and grapes?"—*Lord Capel.*

"Every roof is agreeable to the eye until it is lifted; and then we find tragedy, and moaning women, and hard-eyed husbands, and deluges of Lethe."—*Emerson.*

*b Bruce Travels, etc.*

**18, 19.** (18) **sons,** *etc.*, see *vv.* 4, 13. (19) **came . . wind,** tornado. **from . . wilderness,** sweeping across the desert. **smote . . house,** like a hurricane, or whirlwind.

*Lessons from Job's afflictions.*—We may learn—I. That true piety will bear the removal of property and friends without murmuring. II. That when we are afflicted we should not vent our wrath on winds and waves, on the fraud and perfidy of our fellowmen, etc. III. That God has the right to take away as well as to give. IV. That we see the nature of true resignation. V. That we may see the true source of comfort in trial. VI. That we may see the power of religion in sustaining in the time of trial.[a]

*Whirlwinds in the East.*—On the 25th at four o'clock in the afternoon, we set out from the villages of the Nuba, intending to arrive at Basbock, where is the ferry over the Nile; but we had scarcely advanced two miles into the plain, when we were enclosed in a violent whirlwind, or what is called at sea the waterspout. The plain was red earth, which had been plentifully moistened by a shower in the night-time. The unfortunate camel that had been taken by Cohala seemed to be nearly in the centre of its vortex; it was lifted and thrown down at a considerable distance, and several of his ribs broken. Although, as far as I could guess, I was not near the centre, it whirled me off my feet and threw me down upon my face, so as to make my nose gush out with blood; two of the servants, likewise, had the same fate. It plastered us all over with mud, almost as smoothly as could have been done with a trowel. It took away my sense and breathing for an instant; and my mouth and nose were full of mud when I recovered. I guess the sphere of its action to be about two hundred feet. It demolished one half of a small hut, as if it had been cut through

with a knife; and dispersed the materials all over the plain, leaving the other half standing.[b]

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**20—22.** (20) **arose,** as one stunned by these rapidly accumulating disasters. **rent . . head,** com. outward signs of great sorrow. **fell . . ground,** mark of grief, humility, homage. **worshipped,**[a] resigning himself to God's will. (21) **naked,** *etc.*,[b] he had nothing at the first, he would have nothing at the last. The earth—the universal mother—is here ref. to. **gave,** *etc.*,[c] what I had was the Lord's gift, what I have lost is not by mere accident, but by God's will. **blessed,**[d] he did not curse as Satan sug. (22) **in . . this,** sorrow upon sorrow, and all that followed. **nor . . foolishly,** by unrighteousness to Him.

*Trials and resignation of Job.*—I. His trials: they were beyond measure great. In them we see—1. How great the power of Satan is; 2. How uncertain is all worldly good; 3. That the most eminent saints are not exempt from even the heaviest calamities. II. His resignation. Notice—1. The considerations with which he quieted his mind; 2. The manner in which he expressed his resignation. Learn—(1) To sit loose to earthly things; (2) To stand prepared for trials; (3) To seek the things which neither men nor devils can take away from us.[e]—*The life of the true.*—I. The life of the true has the ordinary vicissitudes. II. The life of the true has an ennobling creed, which is—1. Scriptural; 2. Dignifying; 3. Reasonable. III. The life of the true has a magnanimous religiousness.[f]—*The mourner's song.*—Atheism in sorrow is night without a star. I. Man cannot have any property apart from God. II. Death is the assertion of God's proprietorship. III. Submission to Divine arrangements is the highest test of obedience. IV. Submission is most honourable to man, and most acceptable to God, when it rises into thankfulness. In sorrow the soul finds its surest refuge in fundamental principles. 1. There is a God; 2. That God is careful of me; 3. By impoverishing me of other possessions, He is seeking to enrich me with Himself; 4. He will ultimately take as well my family and property; 5. If I can bless His name in the very sanctuary of affliction and death, what rapture shall I feel in the heaven of unclouded and undying love; 6. Out of this filial submission comes a doubling of the very possessions which were taken away.[g]

*Patience under trial.*—During the absence of Rabbi Meir from his house his two sons died, both of them of uncommon beauty, and enlightened in the law. His wife bore them to her bedchamber, laid them upon the bed, and spread a white covering over their bodies. When Rabbi Meir returned, his first inquiry was for his sons. His wife reached to him a goblet, he praised the Lord at the going out of the Sabbath, drank, and again asked, "Where are my sons, that they too may drink of the cup of blessing?" "They will not be far off," she replied, and placed food before him that he might eat. He was in a gladsome and genial mood; and when he had said grace after the meal, she thus addressed him: "Rabbi, with thy permission I would fain propose to thee one question." "Ask it then, my love," he replied. "A few days ago a person entrusted some jewels to my custody, and now he demands them again; should I give them back to him?" "This is a question," said Rabbi

**Job's submission**

*a* Ps. ci. 1; Isa. xxiv. 15; 1 Pet. v. 2.

*b* Ec. v. 15; 1 Ti. vi. 7; Ps. xlvii. 19; Ec. xii. 7.

*c* Ja. i. 17; La. iii. 38; Am. iii. 6; Isa. xlv. 7.

*d* 1 Sa. iii. 18; 2 Ki. xx. 19; Ps. lxxxix. 52.

*v.* 20. *J. Crapp,* ii. 179.

*vv.* 20, 22. *Dr. S. J. F. Raw,* 41.

*v.* 21. *A. Clare,* 1; *J. J. S. Cellérier,* 313; *J. M. Wynyard,* 42; *F. E. Paget,* 41; *T. F. Dibdin,* 251.

*v.* 22. *H. Stebbing,* ii. 323; *Dr. S. Johnson,* ii. 39.

*e C. Simeon, M. A.*

*f Dr. Thomas.*

"Outward attacks and troubles rather fix than unsettle the Christian, as tempests from without only serve to root the oak faster: whilst an inward canker will gradually rot and decay it."—*H. Moore.*

*g Dr. Parker.*

"The willow, which bends to the tempest, often escapes better than the oak which resists it: and so in great calamities it sometimes happens that light and frivolous spirits recover their elasticity and presence of mind sooner than those of a loftier character"—*Sir W. Scott.*

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"If the sun of God's countenance shine upon me, I may well be content to be wet with some rain in affliction. How oft have I seen the heaven overcast with clouds and tempest; no sun appearing to comfort me; yet even these gloomy seasons have I rid patiently, only with the help of the common light of the day. At last, those beams have broken forth happily, and cheered my soul."—*Bp. Hall.*

'To the mind which is itself, no changes bring surprise." — *Byron.*

*h R. Southey.*

Meir, "which my wife should not have thought it necessary to ask. What! wouldst thou hesitate or be reluctant to restore to every one his own?" "No," she replied: "but yet I thought it best not to restore them without acquainting thee therewith." She then led him to the chamber, and stepping to the bed took the white covering from the dead bodies. "Ah, my sons! my sons!" thus loudly lamented the father; "my sons! the light of mine understanding. I was your father, but ye were my teachers in the law." The mother turned away, and wept bitterly. At length she took her husband by the hand, and said, "Rabbi, didst thou not teach me that we must not be reluctant to restore that which was entrusted to our keeping? See, the Lord gave, the Lord has taken away, and blessed be the name of the Lord!" "Blessed be the name of the Lord!" echoed the holy man; "and blessed be His glorious name for ever."

*The uses of calamity.*—

Methinks if you would know
How visitations of calamity
Affect the pious soul, 'tis shown ye there!
Look yonder at that cloud, which, through the sky,
Sailing alone, doth cross in her career
The rolling moon! I watch'd it as it came,
And deemed the deep opaque would blot her beams;
But, melting like a wreath of snow, it hangs
In folds of wavy silver round, and clothes
The orb with richer beauties than her own,
Then passing, leaves her in her light serene![h]

## *CHAPTER THE SECOND.*

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**Satan again before God**

*a* i. 6.

*b* i. 9—11.

"I am a mighty spirit, and yet I am but to God what lightning is to light; lightning slays one thing—light makes all things live.—*Bailey.*

*c Willes* (1625).

'I am the imperfection of the whole; the great negation of the universe; the pitch profoundest of the fallible. Myself the all of evil which exists; the ocean heaped into a single surge."—*Bailey.*

"You can imagine thistle down so light that

**1—3.** (1) **again . . day,**[a] as if such events were periodical. **present . . Lord,** an enforced attendance. (2) **said,** *etc.*, see on i. 7. (3) **considered,** *see* i. 8. **still . . integrity,** so, while Satan tried, God watched. **cause,** Satan invented a reason.[b] It is now asserted that Satan had no valid reason.

*Satan among the sons of God.*—We read in the Book of Job that when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, Satan came also among them. So, when the children of God come to present themselves before the Lord in the assemblies of His saints, to seek His face in the beauty of holiness, and to be instructed in His will, revealed in His Word, the agents of Satan will likewise sometimes come amongst them, but 'tis only with this devilish design, to make some opposition to the ministers of the Word, and to subvert the faith of the hearers by some contradiction of the doctrines of the Gospel by them delivered.[c]

*Characteristics of Satan.*—

He, above the rest,
In shape and gesture proudly eminent,
Stood like a tower: his form had not yet lost
All its original brightness, nor appear'd
Less than archangel ruin'd, and th' excess
Of glory obscured; as when the sun, new risen,
Looks through the horizontal misty air,
Shorn of his beams; or from behind the moon,

In dim eclipse, disastrous twilight sheds
On half the nations, and with fear of change
Perplexes monarchs; darken'd so, yet shone
Above them all th' archangel; but his face
Deep scars of thunder had intrench'd, and care
Sat on his faded cheek, but under brows
Of dauntless courage, and consid'rate pride,
Waiting revenge: cruel his eye, but cast
Signs of remorse and passion, to behold
The fellows of his crime, the followers rather,
(Far other once beheld in bliss!) condemn'd
For ever now to have their lot in pain;
Millions of spirits, for his fault amerced
Of heav'n, and from eternal splendours flung,
For his revolt: yet faithful now they stood,
Their glory wither'd; as when heaven's fire
Hath scath'd the forest oaks, or mountain pines,
With singèd top their stately growth, though bare,
Stands on the blasted heath.[c]

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when you run after it your running motion would drive it away from you, and that the more you tried to catch it the faster it would fly from your grasp. And it should be with every man, that when he is chased by troubles, they, chasing, shall raise him higher and higher."—*H. W. Beecher.*

c *Milton.*

**4—6.** (4) **skin,** *etc.*,[a] prov. express.; a man will willingly yield one property after another if only his life be spared him. (6) **touch . . flesh,** afflict his person. **curse,** *see* i. 11. (6) **he . . hand,** in your power. **but . . life,** there is still a limit set.

**Satan permitted to try Job with personal afflictions**

a Ma. vi. 25.

*The value of life.*—I. We shall endeavour to establish the importance of life. 1. In proof of this let us appeal to authority; 2. Let us contemplate human life as the work of God; 3. It has an intimate, unavoidable, inseparable connection with another world, and affords us the only opportunity of acquiring good; 4. Consider it in relation to our fellow-creatures, and as affording us the only opportunities of doing good. II. Explain how the belief of its importance should be applied. 1. We should deplore the destruction of it; 2. We should not expose it to injury and hazard; 3. We should be thankful for the continuance of it; 4. However assured of heaven, we should not be impatient for death; 5. Congratulate the pious youth who is beginning to use it; 6. Let it not be a price in the hand of fools. Learn to improve it. Do not live an animal, a worldly, or an idle life. Live the life of God, and begin to live this life now.'—*Satan, as a servant of the Infinite, malevolently dealing with Job's personality.*—I. Satan's low estimate of human nature. 1. He states that goodness is not so dear to a man as his life; 2. That great personal suffering will turn even a good man away from God, and against Him. II. Satan's great power over human nature. 1. His power moves within fixed limits; 2. It is used to torture the body and corrupt the soul. III. Satan's grand purpose with human nature, but it is frustratable. Job, in frustrating Satan—1. Reproves his wife; 2. Vindicates God; 3. Is commended by inspiration.[c]

*The love of life.*—"And what thinkest thou," said Socrates to Aristodemus, "of this continual love of life, this dread of dissolution, which takes possession of us the moment we are conscious of existence?" "I think of it," was the beautiful reply, "as the means employed by the same great and wise Artist, deliberately determined to preserve what He has made."—*Skin for skin.*—Dr. Mason Good thus explains this proverb:

*vv.* 4. *R. Robinson*, 432; *R. Hall*, vi. 196; *T. Chevallier*, *Huls. Lec.* 302.

*vv.* 4. 5. *C. E. Kennaway*, ii. 438.

b *W. Jay.*

"As the musician straineth his strings, and yet he breaketh none of them, but maketh thereby a sweeter melody and better concord; so God, through affliction, makes His own better unto the fruition and enjoying of the life to come."—*Cawdray.*

c *Dr. Thomas.*

"If you tell your troubles to God, you put them into the grave; they will never rise again when you have committed them to Him. If you roll your burden anywhere else, it will roll back again, like the stone of Sisyphus."—*Spurgeon*

B.C. *cir.* 1520.

"Still on its march, unnotic'd and unfelt, moves on our being. We do live and breathe, and we are gone. The spoiler heeds us not. We have our spring-time and our rottenness; and, as we fall, another race succeeds, to perish likewise." —*H. K. White.*

"How loosely do honours sit on men, when every disease shakes them off and lays them in the dust. How miserable is the condition of the glory of this world, which hardly holds out a life, but often dies before us, ravished away by a frown or forfeited by a fault. Or, if it do last as long as its owners, with the staff of office cracked and thrown into the grave, is there buried with the corpse." —*King.*

"Do not insult calamity; it is a barb'rous grossness to lay on the weight of scorn where heavy misery too much already weighs men's fortunes down." —*Daniel.*
*d Ruskin.*

"The skins or spoils of beasts, in the rude and early ages of man, were the most valuable property he could acquire, and that for which he most frequently combated. Skins hence became the chief representation of property, and in many parts of the world continue so to the present hour."—*The true end of life.*— If your life were but a fever-fit—the madness of a night, whose follies were all to be forgotten in the dawn, it might matter little how you fretted away the sickly hours,—what toys you snatched at, or let fall,—what visions you followed wistfully with the deceived eyes of sleepless frenzy. Is the earth only a hospital? Play, if you care to play, on the floor of the hospital dens. Knit its straw into what crowns please you; gather the dust of it for treasure, and die rich in that, clutching at the black motes in the air with your dying hands – and yet it may be well with you. But if this life be no dream, and the world be no hospital—if all the power and peace and joy you can ever win must be won now, and all fruit of victory gathered here, or never—will you still, throughout the puny totality of your life, weary yourselves in the fire for vanity? If there is no rest which remaineth for you, is there none you might presently take? Was this grass of the earth made green for your shroud only, not for your bed, and can you never lie down upon it, but only under it? The heathen, to whose creed you have returned, thought not so. They knew that life brought its contest, but they expected from it also the crown of all contest. No proud one; no jewelled circlet flaming through heaven above the height of the unmerited throne; only some few leaves of wild olive, cool to the tired brow, through a few years of peace. "It should have been of gold, they thought, but Jupiter was poor." This was the best the god could give them. Seeking a greater than this, they had known it a mockery. Not in war, not in wealth, not in tyranny was there any happiness to be found for them—only in kindly peace, fruitful, and free. The wreath was to be of wild olive, mark you—the tree that grows carelessly, tufting the rocks with no vivid bloom, no verdure of branch; only with soft snow of blossom, and scarcely full-filled fruit, mixed with grey leaf and thorn-set stem; no fastening of diadem for you, but with such sharp embroidery! But this, such as it is, you may win while yet you live—type of grey honour and sweet rest. Free-heartedness, and graciousness, and undisturbed trust, and requited love, and the sight of the peace of others, and the ministry to their pain – these, and the blue sky above you, and the sweet waters and flowers of the earth beneath, and mysteries and presences innumerable of living things—these may yet be here your riches, untormenting and divine, serviceable for the life that now is; nor, it may be, without promise of that which is to come.[d]

**Job smitten with boils**

**7, 8.** (7) **boils,** burning, ulcerated sores. (8) **potsherd,**[a] piece of broken vessel. **to . . withal,** perh. bec. of intolerable itching; perh. to remove the matter exuding fr. the sores. **sat . . ashes,**[b] a com. mode of expressing grief.

*Unjust complaints.*—I have read of Cæsar, that, having prepared a great feast for his nobles and friends, it so fell out that the day appointed was so extremely foul that nothing could be done to the honour of the meeting; whereupon he was so displeased and enraged, that he commanded all them that had bows to shoot up their arrows at Jupiter (their chief god), as in

*a* The LXX. says, a shell.
*b* Ma. xi. 21.
*v.* 7. *J. Ruskins, Crit. Sac. Thes.* i. 556; *Calmet, Comment.* iii. 608.
*v.* 8. *J. Saurin, Disc. Hist.* vii. 74. "Let us ever bear in mind that

defiance of him for that rainy weather; which, when they did, their arrows fell short of heaven, and fell upon their own heads, so that many of them were very sorely wounded. So all our murmurings, which are as so many arrows shot at God Himself, they will return upon our own pates—hearts; they reach not Him, but they will wound us; therefore it is better to be mute than to murmur; it is dangerous to provoke "a consuming fire" (Heb. xii. *ult.*).[c]

**9, 10.** (9) **said . . him,**[a] she ought to have been his best comforter. **dost . . integrity,** then she admitted he had integrity. **curse . . die,**[b] *see* i. 11. (10) **said,** *etc*, his reply will aid us in interpreting the word curse in *v.* 9. **foolish,** *i.e.* wicked? **good . . evil,** have we a mind for only *one kind* of Divine proceeding? Must not all, whatever its form, be equally good fr. a God of love? **in . . lips,** but afterwards he was provoked to utter unseemly words.

*Good and evil from God.*—I. An apparantly strange doctrine that good and evil come from God. II. Yet are we not taught that evil as well as good come from God? III. If evil come upon us, we have merited it. IV. The good far more than counterbalances the evil. V. The evil sent upon us by God is the means of working out good for us[c]—*Good and evil both from God*—I. Job believed everything to be ordained of God. II. Job considered it an unavoidable consequence of our present state that the life of man should be checkered with good and evil. 1. Let us submit with thankfulness to this form of the Divine administration, in which everything works together for wise purposes; 2. Let us not dare to blame Providence if we see not the tendency of the evils of life; 3. Let us look forward to, and prepare for, that world in which we shall receive only good at the hands of God. III. Job was resolved to receive each state with an equal mind. IV. Explain the nature of resignation. V. Some of those considerations which should lead to the practice of resignation. 1. All affliction cometh from the Lord; 2. It is the consequence of sin; 3. We often mistake the nature of those things we call evils; 4. How many blessings are mingled with them; 5. Affliction produces good results, if we do not by obstinacy oppose its tendency.[d]

*A wife's mode of comforting.*—At one time I was sorely vexed and tried by my own sinfulness, by the wickedness of the world, and by the dangers that beset the Church. One morning I saw my wife dressed in mourning. Surprised, I asked her who had died. "Do you not know?" she replied; "God in heaven is dead." "How can you talk such nonsense, Katie?" I said; "how can God die? Why, He is immortal, and will live through all eternity." "Is that really true?" she asked. "Of course," I said, still not perceiving what she was aiming at; "how can you doubt it? As surely as there is a God in heaven, so sure is it that He can never die." "And yet," she said, "though you do not doubt that, you are so hopeless and discouraged." Then I observed what a wise woman my wife was, and mastered my sadness.[e]

**11—13.** (11) **when . . friends,** his three chief friends. good men of a sort. **heard . . him,** the ruin of so great and rich a man would soon be known. **they . . place,** ea. fr. his own district; ea. moved by his own sympathy. **Eliphaz,** *God is*

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the only thing we have really to be afraid of is fearing anything more than God."—*Book of the Fathers.*

*c Brooks.*

**the advice of Job's wife**

*a* Acc. to Chaldee, "Dinah, his wife, said to him."

*b* "And yet thou dost hold fast thine integrity, blessing God and dying."—*Dr. Good.*—"Renounce God, and die."—*Noyes.*—"Bid farewell to God, and die."—*Rosenmüller.*—"Give thanks to God, and die."—*Castellio.*

*c Dr. Eadie.*

*v.* 9. *Weemse, Expos.* i. 144; *Dr. R. Clarke*, 297.

*vv.* 9, 10. *J. Killinbeck*, 189; *Dr. J. Jeffery*, i. 135; *G. Mathew*, i. 351.

*d Dr. Adamson.*

*v* 10. *L. Atterbury*, 459; *Dr. W. Claggett*, i. 413; *Dr. N. Brady*, i. 130; *L. Sterne*, ii. 189; *T. Pyle*, iii. 445; *J. Sed* i. 305; *S. Ducis*, ii. 57; *J. Penn*, i. 229; *B. Bennett*, ii. 263; *S. Quincy*, 38; *B. Clement*, ii. 75; *Dr. J. Napleton*, iii. 280; *A. Chapman*, i. 215; *J. Francis*, i. 65; *Dr. H. Blair* iv. 335; *J. W. Wyndyard*, 227.

*e Luther.*

**Job is visited by his three friends**

*c* Ge. xxxvi. 4—16; 1 Ch. i. 35, 36.

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*b* Son of Abraham by Keturah. Acc. to Rawlinson the Shuhites were the *Tsukhi*, a people on the Euphrates above Hit.

*c* *Kitto* thinks it was the town named in Josh. xv. 41; and he argues thence that the scene of this Bk. is laid in land of Edom.

*d* Ge. xxvii. 38, xxix. 11; Jud. ii. 4; Ru. i. 9; 1 Sa. xxiv. 16.

*e* Ge. l. 10; 1 Sa. xxxi. 13; Eccles. xxii. 12.

*r.* 13. *Bonar* (of Cramond), 1.

*f C. Simeon, M.A.*

*g Dr. Thomas.*

*h A. Barnes.*

"It is by sympathy we enter into the concerns of others, that we are moved as they are moved, and are never suffered to be indifferent spectators of almost anything which men can do or suffer. For sympathy may be considered as a sort of substitution, by which we are put into the place of another man, and affected in many respects as he is affected.—*burke.*

*i J. Spencer.*

"First on thy friend deliberate with thyself; pause, ponder, sift; not eager in the choice, nor jealous of the chosen: fixing, fix; — judge before friendship,

*strength.* **Temanite**, of the fam. of Teman.[a] **Bildad**, *son of contention*, i.e. a quarreller. **Shuhite**, prob. of fam of Shua.[b] **Zophar**, *sparrow;* he was a mere twitterer; he had the least to say, but his speeches were rough and cutting. **Naamathite**, locality uncertain.[c] **for they**, *etc.*, their mutual friendship prevented any fr. trying to be beforehand with the rest. (12) **up . . off**, at such a reasonable distance that they might know him. **and . . not**, as in former times, he was so altered. **they . . voice**,[d] com. expression to denote grief. (13) **seven . . nights**, usual time of mourning.[e] **none . . him**, *see below.*

*Friendly sympathy illustrated.*—I. Consider the nature of love. II. The effects of sympathy. III. The excellence of true religion. By way of improvement, we will—1. Recommend to you the exercise of these dispositions; 2. Suggest some cautions in relation to it.[f]—*Genuine friendship.*—I. It was deepened by adversity. II. It was prompted by relieving labour. 1. It set these men to a self-denying work; 2. A self-denying work in order to relieve. III. It was vicariously afflicted. IV. It was tenderly reticent. Silence, not speech, is the best service that friendship can render in sorrow—1. Because it is the strongest evidence of the depth of our friendship towards the suffering friend; 2. Because silence is most consistent with our ignorance of Divine providence towards our suffering friend; 3. Because it is most congenial to the mental state of our suffering friend.[g]—*The silence of Job's friends.*—I. They were amazed at the extent of his sufferings. II. The effect of great calamity is often to prevent utterance. III. They might not have known what to say. IV. They seem to have been very early thrown into doubt in regard to the real character of Job. V. In this stage of things to administer rebuke would seem to be cruel.[h]

*Friendship tried in the times of affliction.*—It is reported of Herodias, wife of Herod the Tetrarch, when the emperor had deprived her husband of the tetrarchy, and banished him into France, understanding that Herodias was Agrippa's sister, gave her all her husband's estate, supposing that she would not go along with him; but she answered the emperor, saying, "There is a cause that hinders me from partaking of your bounty, the affection I bear my husband, because I have shared with him in his felicity." Whereupon the emperor, being displeased with her answer, banished her likewise. And thus it is that true friendship is best tried in times of affliction and distress. A brother, a friend, a wife, is for the time of adversity. Away then with those summer birds, those false-hearted friends, who, like ditches, are full in the winter season, but dry in the heat of summer, when we have most need of them.[i]

*The proof of faithful friendship.*—

Not stayed state, but feebly stay,
Not costly robes, but bare array;
Not passed wealth, but present want,
Not heaped store, but slender scant;
Not plenty's purse, but poor estate,
Not happy hap, but froward fate;
Not wish at will, but want of joy,
Not heart's good health, but heart's annoy;
Not freedom's use, but prison's thrall,
Not costly seat, but lowest fall;

Not weal, I mean, but wretched woe,
Doth truly try the friend from foe:
And nought but froward fortune proves,
Who fawning feigns, or simply loves.*j*

B.C. *cir.* 1

then confide till death."—*Young.*

*j* *Lyly.*

## CHAPTER THE THIRD.

**Job curses the day of his birth**

**1—3.** (1) **after this,** *i.e.* the long silence of his friends. **opened .. mouth,** formula, expressing deliberation and gravity. **cursed,** not the word used before,[a] but the proper word for cursing. (2) **spake,** answered. (3) **let .. born,**[b] *etc.*, if there had been no such day, then he had not been.

*The maddening force of suffering.*—This chapter is the language of a man overwhelmed with suffering, and we must explain it accordingly. We must not apply to it the same canons of interpretation as we would to the language of a man in calmness, in health, in prosperity, in exultation; a man's language must be construed according to the mood of his soul. Here we have sufferings forcing a human soul—I. To the use of extravagant language. II. To deplore the fact of existence. III. To hail the condition of the dead. IV. To pry into the reasons of a miserable life.[c]—*Job curses the day of his birth.*—Consider—I. The manner in which he expressed his impatience. 1. He vents his complaints in very unbecoming terms; 2. But is this an uncommon line of conduct? Let us notice—II. Some observations arising from it. 1. The folly of arraigning God's providence; 2. The inability of Satan to prevail against the Lord's people; 3. The necessity of fleeing from the wrath to come.[d]

*Opening the mouth* (*ver.* 1).—It is to be observed, says Mr. Blackwell (*Inquiry into the Life of Homer*), that the Turks, Arabians, and Indians, and in general most of the inhabitants of the East, are a solitary kind of people: they speak but seldom, and never long without emotion. Speaking is a matter of moment among such people, as we may gather from their usual introductions: for, before they deliver their thoughts, they give notice by saying, *I will open my mouth*, as here; that is, unloose their tongue. It is thus in Homer, Hesiod, and Orpheus; and thus also *Virgil:*

——"finem dedit ore loquendi."
He made an end of speaking with his mouth.[e]

*Affliction a normal state.*—Whatsoever is under the moone is subject to corruption, alterations; and so long as thou livest upon earth looke not for other. Thou shalt not here find peaceable and cheerful dayes, quiet times, but rather cloudes, stormes, calumnies, such is our fate. . . . Yea, but thou thinkest thou art more miserable than the rest, other men are happy in respect of thee, their miseries are but flea-bitings to thine, thou alone art unhappy, none so bad as thyself. Yet if, as Socrates said, "All the men in the world should come and bring their grievances together, of body, mind, fortune, sores, ulcers, madness, epilepsies, agues, and all those common calamities of beggary, want, servitude, imprisonment, and lay them on a heap to be equally divided, wouldst thou share alike, and take thy portion, or be as thou art? Without question thou wouldst be as thou art. If some Jupiter should say, to give us all content—

*a* i. 11, ii. 9.

*b* Jer. xx. 14.

"There is nothing that I know of, in ancient or modern poetry, equal to the entire burst, whether in the wilderness and horror of the imprecations, or the terrible sublimity of its imagery."—*Dr. Good.*

*c* *Dr. Thomas.*

*d* *C. Simeon, M.A.*

*v.* 1. *A. B. Evans, Lec. on Job*, xxvii.

*e* *Burder.*

"I compare the troubles which we have to undergo in the course of the year, to a great bundle of fagots, far too large for us to lift. But God does not require us to carry the whole at once; He mercifully unties the bundle, and gives us first one stick, which we are to carry to-day, and then another, which we are to carry to-morrow; and so on. This we might easily manage, if we would only take the burden appointed for us each day; but we choose to

B.C. *cir.* 1250.

"Well, be't so, then: you, master souldier,
Shall be a merchant; you, sir lawyer,
A country gentleman; go you to this,
That side you: why stand yee? It's as well as 'tis."

Every man knows his own but not others' defects and miseries. Be silent then, rest satisfied: comfort thyself with other men's misfortunes, and as the moldiwarpe in Æsope told the fox complaining for want of a tail, and the rest of his companions, "You complain of toies, but I am blinde, be quiet." I say to thee, be thou satisfied. It is recorded of the hares that with a generall consent they went to drown themselves, out of a feeling of their misery; but when they saw a company of frogs more fearful than they were, they began to take courage and comfort again. Confer thine estate with others. Be content, and rest satisfied; for thou art well in respect of others; be thankful for that thou hast, that God hath done for thee; He hath not made thee a monster, a beast, a base creature, as He might, but a man, a Christian, such a man; consider aright of it, thou art full well as thou art. No man can have what he will; he may choose whether he will desire that which he hath not. Thy lot is falne, make the best of it. If we should all sleep at all times (as Endymion is said to have done), who then were happier than his fellow? Our life is but short, a very dream, and while we look about, eternity is at hand. Our life is a pilgrimage on earth, which wise men pass with great alacrity. If thou be in woe, sorrow, want, distresse, in paine, or sicknesse, think of that of our Apostle, "God chastiseth them whom He loveth," "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy" (Ps. cxxvi. 6). "As the furnace proveth the potter's vessel, so doth temptation try men's thoughts" (Eccles. xxv. 5). 'Tis for thy good. Hadst thou not been so visited thou hadst been utterly undone; as gold in the fire, so men are tried in adversity; and, which Camerarius hath well shadowed in an embleme of a thresher and corn:—

"A threshing separates from straw the corn,
By crosses from the world's chaffe are we born."*f*

Increase our troubles by carrying yesterday's stick over again to-day, and adding to-morrow's burden to our load, before we are required to bear it."—*John Newton.*

"Our way in this world is like a walk under a row of trees, checkered with light and shade: and because we cannot all along walk in the sunshine, we therefore perversely fix only upon the darker passages, and so lose all the comfort of our comforts. We are like froward children who, if you take one of their playthings from them, throw away all the rest in spite."—*Bp. Hopkins.*

*f Burton.*

**4, 5.** (4) **let . . darkness,** *etc.*,[a] "Let not God stoop fr. His bright throne to raise it up fr. its dark hiding-place." (5) **the . . death,** = the deepest darkness.[b] **stain,** absorb it. **cloud . . it,** let cloud piled on cloud utterly hide and bury it. **blackness . . it,** "let it be involved in bitterness."[c]

*The maddening force of suffering.*—Here is suffering urging a man to the use of extravagant language. Howbeit, it is natural, three facts will show this. 1. Great sufferings generate great passions in the soul; 2. Great passions often become irrepressible; 3. When great passions become irrepressible, they express themselves extravagantly.[d]

*Complaint in suffering.*—When this plant, this peace, is deeply rooted in us, it spreadeth its branches abroad over all,—over all cross events, over all injuries, over all errors, over envy, malice, deceit, and violence, and shadoweth them that they are not seen, or not seen in that horror which may shake it; spreadeth itself over the poor, and relieveth them; over the malicious, and melteth him; over the violent man, and overcometh him by standing the shock; keepeth itself to its root, is fixed and fastened there; and, when the wind bloweth and the rain falleth, and all beat upon it, when the tempest is loudest, is ever the

**wishes it may be blotted out**

*a* "Let not God seek it."—*Noyes.* —"Let not God inquire after it."—*Herder.*

*b* Phrase of frequent recurrence, Job x. 21, 22; Ps. xxiii. 4; Am. v. 8; Je. ii. 6, etc.

*c Jerome.*

*d Dr. Thomas.*

*v.* 5. *S. Deyling, Obs.* 3.

"Graces multiply by afflictions, as the saints did by

same, is peace still.—*The fruits of affliction.*—Maistres Alyce, in my most hartywise, I commend me to you. And whereas I am enfourmed by my son Heron of the losse of my barnes and our neighbours' also. with all the corn that was therein; albeit (saving God's pleasure), it is gret pitie of so much good corne lost; yet sith it hath liked Hym to sende us such a chaunce, we must and are bounden, not only to be content, but also to be glad of His visitacion. He sente us all that we have loste, and sith He hath by such a chaunce taken it away againe, His pleasure be fulfilled! Let us never grudge thereat, but take it in good worth and hartely thank Him as well for adversitie as for prosperitie. And peradventure we have more cause to thank Him for our losse than for our winning, for His wisdome better seeth what is good for vs than we do our selves. Therefore, I pray you be of good cheere, and take all the household with you to church, and there thanke God, both for that He hath given us, and for that He hath taken from us, and for that He hath left us; which if it please Hym, He can encrease when He will, and if it please Hym to leave us yet lesse, at His pleasure be it! I pray you to make some good ensearche what my poore neighbours have loste, and bid them take no thought therfore; for if I shold not leave myself a spone, there shal no poore neighbour of mine bere losse by any chaunce happened in my house. I pray you be, with my children and your household, merry in God; and devise somewhat with your frendes what way wer best to take for provision to be made for corne for our household and for sede thys yere comming, if ye thinke it good that we kepe the ground still on our handes. And whether ye think it good that we shall do so or not; yet I think it were not best sodenlye thus to leave it all up, and to put away our folk of our farme, till we have somewhat advised us thereon. Howbeit if we have more nowe then ye shall nede, and which can get them other maisters, ye may then discharge us of them. But I would not that any man were sodenly sent away, he wote nere wether. At my coming hither I perceived none other but that I shold tarry still with the kinge's grace. But now I shal, I thinke, because of this chaunce, get leave this next weke to come home and se you, and then shall we further devyse together uppon all thinges what order shal be best to take. And thus hartely fare you well, with all our children as ye can wishe. At Woodestok, the thirde day of Septembre, by the hand of Thomas More, knight. Your louing husbande.[f]

B.C. *cir.* 1529.

persecutions. 'The more they were afflicted the more they multiplied.' These terrors may affront us; they shall not affright us. Cross is rough and smarting; but we look to the unction of comfort, that makes them portable and easy. In all conditions we bless His providence who, according to His own wisdom, not ours, disposeth things; which, if they be harsh to a state that must suffer, are good for an estate that shall be blessed for ever."—*T. Adams.*

[e] *A. Farindon.*

[f] *Letter to Lady More* Written from Woodstock, on hearing that his barns and some of the barns of his neighbours had been burnt. Its gentleness to his wife, who was of an anxious and ill-tempered turn, and its kindness to his poor neighbours, as well as its cheerful thankfulness, are very beautiful.

**6, 7.** (6) **night,** *ver.* 3. **let . . it,** let it be as deep night without a star. **joined,** *etc., marg.*, the idea is, that all the days rejoice, but this shall be silent. (7) **solitary,** barren, unfruitful.

**that it may not be numbered with other days**

*The maddening force of suffering.*—Here is suffering urging a man to deplore the fact of his existence. In this passage he deplores—1. The fact that he existed at all; 2. That having existed, he did not die at the very dawn of his being. The fact that suffering can thus make existence intolerable suggests the following truths. 1. Annihilation is not the worst of evils; 2. Desire for death is no proof of genuine religion; 3. Hell must be an overwhelmingly terrible condition of existence.[a]

"God is the brave man's hope, and not the coward's excuse."—*Plutarch.*

*Hidden sorrows.*—Many a heart and countenance wears a semblance of gladness, only to conceal its deep sorrow. We cannot always judge of a man by what he seems. Looking at

When man deals with God, he must never remember what he is before others.

[a] *Dr. Thomas.*

"Before an affliction is digested,

B.C. *cir.* 1520.

consolation ever comes too soon; and after it is digested, it comes too late; but there is a mark between these two, as fine almost as a hair, for a comforter to take aim at." —*Sterne.*

*b Dr. Macduff.*

the sea of life, we see it studded over with white sails and gay pennons, and sparkling waves; we forget its eddying whirlpools and treacherous reefs and brooding storms. How little do God's ministers know, in looking down from their pulpits on apparently bright faces, gay attire, and undimmed eyes, how many breaking hearts there are; sorrows too deep for utterance, with which a stranger dare not intermeddle! No, we cannot let all that looks happy pass for unmingled joy. It is often the reverse; like the wretched singer on the street, who, passing from door to door, struggles to warble her gleeful songs. Singing! It is a poor counterfeit of crushing sorrow. Singing! The tones are joyous; but little does the passer-by know of the long tale of woe—the widow's agony, the orphan's tears, the desolate hearth, which is muffled and dissembled under that apparent "glee."[b]

**let professional diviners curse that day**

**8—10.** (8) **let . . day.**[a] let hired diviners, who are supposed to render a day one of evil omen, invoke maledictions on this day. **ready . . mourning,** *marg.*, if these magicians had power over nature, even over the monsters of the deep, let them curse the day. (9) **twilight,** *lit.* the breathing, *i.e.* the hour when the cool breezes blow. **neither . . day,**[b] *i.e.* let there be no star to illumine the evening, no ray to brighten the dawn. (10) **nor . . eyes,** by preventing conception and birth.

*Afflictions.*—Stars shine brightest in the darkest night; torches give the best light when beaten; grapes yield most wine when most pressed; spices smell sweetest when pounded; vines are the better for bleeding; gold looks the brighter for scouring; juniper smells sweetest in the fire; camomile the more you tread it, the more you spread it. The Jews were best when most afflicted. Afflictions are the saint's best benefactors to heavenly affections. Where afflictions hang heaviest, corruptions hang loosest. And grace, that is hid in nature, as sweet water in rose-leaves, is then most fragrant when the fire of affliction is put under to distil it out.[c]

*a* The practice of cursing the day, or the sun, is said to have prevailed among an African tribe called the Atlantes. See *Herodotus* iv. 184; *Pliny, Nat. Hist.* v. 8; *Strabo*, xvii. 780.

*b* See *marg.*

*v.* 8. *Crit. Sac. Thes. Nov.* i. 783.

*c T. Brookes.*

**he wishes he had died in infancy**

**11, 12.** (11) **why,** *etc*, a question that leads to a descr. of what he then would have been. (12) **prevent,**[a] so as to hinder the birth; or, why did they become a couch for the infant child? **why . . suck?** why, being born alive, had his infancy been nourished?

*The knees preventing.*—This is not to be understood of the mother; but either of the midwife, who received the new-born infant into her lap, or of the father, as it was usual for him to take the child upon his knees as soon as it was born (Gen. l. 23). This custom obtained among the Greeks and Romans. Hence the goddess Levana had her name, causing the father in this way to own the child.[b]

*a* Is. lxvi. 12.

Sanctified afflictions are healing medicines.

"Afflictions clarify the soul." —*Quarles.*

*b Gill.*

**in which case he had been in the grave**

**13—16.** (13) **now,** instead of this suffering, I should be in the grave. **slept,** the sleep of death. **rest,** for pain of mind and body. (14) **with . . earth,** who have escaped all mortal toils. **which . . themselves,** tombs. (15) **who . . silver,** prob. all. to custom of burying treasures with the dead. (16) **untimely,** premature. **infants . . light,** as one still-born.

*The maddening force of suffering.*—Here is suffering urging a man to hail the condition of the dead. He looked to death—I. As a real rest. II. As a common rest. The state of the dead as here described suggests two practical thoughts. I. The transi-

*a* Such is the view of *Rosenmüller*; and *Schultens* says this was an Arab custom. In the tomb of David, &c. to *Josephus*,

toriness of all worldly distinctions; 2. The folly of making corporeal interests supreme.[b]

*Desolate places* (*ver.* 14).—This description is intended as a contrast to that contained in the two ensuing lines; and the same sort of contrast is admirably continued throughout the entire passage. The grave is the common receptacle of all: of the patriotic princes who have restored to their ancient magnificence the ruins of former cities, and fixed their palaces in them; and of the sordid accumulators of wealth, which they have not spirit to make use of; of the wicked, who have never ceased from troubling, and of those who have been wearied and worn out by their vexations; of the high and the low, the slave and his task-master, the servant and his lord. This idea has not, in general, been attended to, and hence the passage has not been clearly understood. Our common rendering, "Which built desolate places for themselves," is hardly explicit, though it is literally consonant with most of the versions. Schultens, not adverting to the antithesis intended to subsist between the fourteenth and fifteenth verses, imagines he perceives in the passage a metaphorical reference to the massy pyramids or sepulchres of the Egyptian monarchs, of which several have descended to our own day; and this idea has also been generally followed. But the conception is too recondite, and far less impressive, as it appears to me, than that now offered. The images and phraseology of his poem, as I have already had occasion to observe, were often copied by the boldest writers of the Jewish people; by King David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel; and the smallest attention to their respective compositions will show us that the idea here communicated soon became proverbial; and that "the restorer of ruined wastes," or "of ancient ruins," was not only a phrase in general acceptation, but regarded as a character of universal veneration and esteem.[c]

**17. there,** in the grave. **wicked . . troubling,** by persecution, slander, etc., or, like the Sabeans and Chaldæans,[a] by robbery and violence. The grave is the only place where a really good man may hope to escape the troubling of the wicked.[b] **weary,** those wearied in *mind* by anxiety, study, etc., and in *body* by toil and pain.

*Two standpoints.*—John Bacon was an eminent English sculptor. Hundreds of thousands of visitors to Westminster Abbey have gazed upon the fruits of his skill in the monument of Lord Chatham, and his name and fame are transmitted to succeeding generations by the poet Cowper, who says of him, that he—

> "Gives more than female beauty to a stone,
> And Chatham's eloquence to marble lips."

He lived and died in the faith of a Christian, and desiring to bear his testimony to the Gospel after his death, he ordered by his will a plain tablet, with the following inscription, to be placed near his grave:—"What I was as an Artist seemed to be of some importance while I lived; but what I really was as a Believer in Christ Jesus is the only thing of importance to me now."

**18, 19.** (18) **prisoners,** wearied with their captivity, are released as fr. a living tomb, the prison. **hear . . oppressor,**

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much treasure was buried.

*b Dr. Thomas.*

"As surely as the sepulchre of Christ became an empty sepulchre, so surely the sepulchres of His people shall become empty sepulchres also; as surely as He got up and sang a jubilee of life and immortality, so surely shall His people come out of the grave."—*Beaumont.*

"The reconciling grave swallows distinction first, that made us foes: there all lie down in peace together."—*Southern.*

"Henceforth I'll bear affliction till it do cry out itself, enough, enough, and die."—*Shakespeare.*

*c Dr. Good.*

**where there is rest and peace**

*a* i. 15, 17.

*b* 2 Pet. ii. 8; Ps. xxxix. 1.

*v.* 17. *Dr. D. Williams*, ii. 179; *J. Stennett*, iii. 372; *J. Wesley*, vii. 365; *T. Blackley*, iii. 321; *A. B. Evans*, 41.

*vv.* 17—19. *Dr. L. Howard*, 216; *J. Mackenzie*, iii. 257 (Scotch Preacher).

**where the prisoners rest, and**

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death sets them free. (19) **small . . there,** for death levels all. **servant,** or slave. **free . . master,** to whose exactions he was forced, in life, to yield; and fr. whose capricious cruelty he suffered.

*The resurrection.*—Is it so, that these bodies of yours shall rise and be in glory with Jesus Christ? Then, O all you, the elect of God, fear not death, because death is a fitting your bodies for that estate wherein you shall live with Christ in glory for ever. Did death annihilate you and frustrate you of glory, you might fear death; but death doth to you as a husbandman with his corn. Should he keep his corn always in his house, he would grow a beggar quickly; but he casts his corn in the ground, and there it lies and rots, that so a fivefold reward may come to him of it. So God makes you lie in the grave—not for ever, but that He might show His power in raising you up at the last day.[a]

**20—23.** (20) **light,** a cheerful, gladsome thing: here it may = life **given . . misery,** as if in mockery of his woe. **life . . soul,**[a] to him who suffers bitter grief. (21) **long . . not,** regarding death as a privilege. **dig . . treasures,** hence, expose themselves to dangers. (22) **which . . exceedingly,** *Heb*, "who rejoice upon joy or exultation." (23) **light . . hid,**[b] light to him only reveals the nature and extent of his woe; but shows no way of escape.

*The maddening force of human suffering.*—Here is suffering urging a man to pry into the reasons of a miserable life. The great question running through these verses is, why should God continue the existence of a miserable man? There are, no doubt, good reasons, that we shall one day understand and appreciate. I. Great sufferings are often spiritually useful to the sufferer. II. Great sufferings are often spiritually useful to the spectator.[c]

*Hidden treasures* (*v.* 21).—We are constantly hearing of treasures which have been or are about to be discovered. Sometimes you may see a large space of ground, which has been completely turned up, or an old foundation, or ruin, entirely demolished, in hopes of finding the hidden gold. A man has found a small coin, has heard a tradition, or has had a dream, and off he goes to his toil. Perhaps he has been seen on the spot, or he has consulted a soothsayer; the report gets out; and then come the needy, the old, and the young, a motley group, all full of anxiety, to join in the spoil. Some have iron instruments, others have sticks, and some their fingers to scratch up the ground. At last some of them begin to look at each other with considerable suspicion, as if all were not right, and each seems to wish he had not come on so foolish an errand, and then steal off as quietly as they can. I once knew a deep tank made completely dry (by immense labour), in the hope of finding great treasures, which were said to have been cast in during the ancient wars. Passing near, one day, when they had nearly finished their work, and their hopes had considerably moderated, I went up to the sanguine owner (whose face immediately began to show its chagrin), and inquired, "Why are you taking so much trouble to empty that tank?" He replied, as calmly as he could, "We are merely cleaning it out." Poor man! I believe he found nothing but stones and bones, and a few copper coins. "Dig for it more than for hid treasures." finds a practical illustration in the East, and is a figure of common use in the language.[d]

**servants are free**

"The earth opens impartially her bosom to receive the beggar and the prince." — *Horace.*

"The grave is, I suspect, the sole commonwealth which attains that dead flat of social equality that life in its every principle so heartily abhors."—*Bulwer Lytton.*

*a Chris. Love.*

**he asks why the sad should live**

*a* "To desire to die so as to be free fr. sin is a mark of grace; to desire to die so as to escape troubles is a mark of corruption. He was ill fitted to die, who was so unwilling to live."—*Rev. A. R. Faussett, M.A.*

*b* xix. 9; La. iii. 7.

*c Dr. Thomas.*

*v.* 20. *T. Hunter*, i. 173.

"Tears and sorrows and losses are a part of what must be experienced in this present state of life; some for our manifest good; and all, therefore, it is trusted, for our good concealed, —for our final and greatest good." — *Leigh Hunt.*

"What a privilege is this, to possess God in all things while we have them, and all things in God when they are taken from us! '—*Newton.*

*d Roberts.*

**24–26.** (24) **sighing . . eat.**[a] my sorrow prevents my eating.[b] **roarings,** groans. (25) **thing . . me,** his sufferings were greater than his greatest anticipations of trouble. (26) **I . . safety,** living in unguarded security. **yet . . came,** notwithstanding the precautionary measures that grew out of my apprehensions.

*Lessons taught by the sufferings of Job.*—We are taught—I. The utmost power that the devil is capable of exerting on man. 1. He did not destroy life; 2. He did not destroy piety. II. We also learn the strength of genuine religion. Here we have two things to help us which Job had not. 1. The example of Christ; 2. The assurance of a future life.[c]

*The uses of pain.*—Pain has been the means of increasing our knowledge, our skill, and our comforts. Look to the discoveries made in science, in botany, in chemistry, in anatomy; what a knowledge have we gained of the structure and uses of plants, while we were seeking some herb to soothe pain or cure disease! what a knowledge have we gained of drugs, and salts, and earths, useful for agriculture or for the fine arts, while we have been seeking only to find an ointment or a medicine! we have sought a draught to allay the burning thirst of a fever, and we have found a dozen delicious beverages to drink for our pleasure or relief. We studied anatomy to find out the seat of disease, and how to attack it, and we found what we did not seek, a thousand wonderful works of God! a thousand most curious contrivances, most admirable delights! We found a model for the ribs of a ship—we found a pattern of a telescope in the eye—we found joints, and straps, and knittings, and valves which have been copied into the workshop of the mechanic, and the study of the philosopher. Yes, we may thank our liability to pain for these—for if pain had not existed, who can tell whether these things would have been so soon, if at all, discovered?[d]—*Ministry of affliction.*—An invalid of twenty years, whose sufferings were extreme, was one night thinking of the reason of this long-continued infliction. Suddenly the room filled with light, and a beautiful form bent over her, saying, "Daughter of sorrow, art thou impatient?" "No; but I am full of pain and disease, and I see no end; nor can I see why I must suffer thus. I know that I am a sinner; but I hoped that Christ's sufferings, and not mine, would save me. Oh! why does God deal thus with me?" "Come with me, daughter, and I will show thee." "But I cannot walk." "True, true! There, gently, gently!" He tenderly took her up in his arms, and carried her over land and water, till he set her down in a far-off city, and in the midst of a large workshop. The room was full of windows, and the workmen seemed to be near the light, and each with his own tools; and all seemed to be so intent upon their work that they neither noticed the new-comers nor spoke to one another. They seemed to have small, brown pebbles, which they were grinding and shaping and polishing. Her guide pointed her to one who seemed to be most earnestly at work. He had a half-polished pebble, which was now seen to be a diamond, in a pair of strong iron pincers. He seemed to grasp the little thing as if he would crush it, and to hold it on to the rough stone without mercy. The stone whirled, and the dust flew, and the jewel grew smaller and lighter. Ever and anon he would stop, hold it up to the light, and examine it carefully. "Work-

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**and deplores his own sad condition**

*a* Ps. xlii. 3.

*b* "*Umbreit* or, as the effort to eat increased the disease, he sighed before eating. *Rosenmüller*, or, sighing takes the place of food."—*Good.*

*c Dr. Thomas.*

"God washes the eyes with tears until they can behold the invisible land where tears shall come no more. O love! O affliction! ye are the guides that show us the way through the great airy space where our loved ones walked; and as hounds easily follow the scent before the dew be risen, so God teaches us, while yet our sorrow is wet, to follow on and find our dear ones in heaven."—*Beecher.*

*d Sharpe.*

"In afflictions, especially national or public calamities, God oftentimes seems to make no distinction between the objects of His compassion and those of His fury, indiscriminately involving them in the same destiny; yet His prescience and His intentions make a vast difference where His inflictions do not seem to make any; as when no the same test,

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and with the self-same fire, we urge as well the gold as the blended lead or antimony, but with foreknowing and designing such a disparity in the events, as to consume the ignobler minerals, or blow them off into dross or fumes, and make the gold more pure, and full of lustre."—*Boyle.*

"Human misery is to Divine mercy as a black soil to a sparkling diamond; or as a sable cloud to the sunbeams."—*William Secker.*

*c Dr. Todd.*

man," said the sufferer, "will you please to tell me why you bear on, and grind the jewel so hard?" "I want to grind off every flaw and crack in it." "But don't you waste it?" "Yes; but what is left is worth so much the more. The fact is, this diamond, if it will bear the wheel long enough, is to occupy a very important place in the crown we are making up for our king. We take much more pains with such. We have to grind and polish them a great while; but when they are done they are very beautiful. The king was here yesterday, and was much pleased with our work, but wanted this jewel, in particular, to be ground and polished a great deal. So you see how hard I hold it down on this stone. And, see! there is not a crack nor a flaw in it! What a beauty it will be!" Gently the guide lifted up the poor sufferer, and again laid her down on her own bed of pain. "Daughter of sorrow, dost thou understand the vision?" "Oh, yes! but may I ask you one question?" "Certainly." "Were you sent to me to show me all this?" "Assuredly." "Oh! may I take to myself the consolation that I am a diamond, and am now in the hands of the strong man, who is polishing it for the crown of the Great King?" "Daughter of sorrow, thou mayest have that consolation; and every pang of suffering shall be like a flash of lightning in a dark night, revealing eternity to thee; and hereafter thou shalt 'run without weariness, and walk without faintness,' and sing with those who have 'come out of great tribulation.'"[c]

## *CHAPTER THE FOURTH.*

**Eliphaz replies**

**his courteous commencement**

"A man can never be a true gentleman in manner until he is a true gentleman at heart."—*Dickens.*

"We write our blessings on the water, but our afflictions on the rock."—*Dr. Guthrie.*

*a Dr. Thomas.*

"Afflictions clarify the soul, and, like hard masters, give more hard directions, tutoring the nonage of uncurbed affections."—*Quarles.*

*b Dr. Good.*

**1, 2.** (1) **Eliphaz,** *see* ii. 11. (2) **if . . grieved?** will you take it ill, if we venture to speak? **but . . speaking,** we must speak whether you will or no.

*Points of agreement between the aged friends of Job.*—I. They were all aged men and possessed of great experience (xv. 9, 10), and this Elihu declares. II. They were all believers in a personal God, a special Providence, and a present retribution (ix. 7—9, xxviii. 31—39). III. They all repudiate the doctrine that the wicked prosper, and the innocent suffer, and resolutely maintain the opposite (iv. 7, v. 3—5, viii. 8, 10, 11, 22, xi. 20, etc). IV. They all hold and argue Job's guilt, and vindicate Divine justice in his sufferings (xi. 6, xxii. 4—11). V. They all accuse him in strong language of hypocrisy, and of denying the personal superintendence of God. VI. They accuse him of setting a bad example to others, and recommend him resignation and prayer, by which he would obtain greater prosperity than before. VII. They are all manifestly ignorant of a future state of existence; hence they considered that retribution here was full and final.[a]

*To essay.*—The term "to essay or attempt" is peculiarly expressive in the Hebrew, and is derived from the sense of smell exercised by hounds and other animals, in essaying or exploring the track of the prey they are in pursuit of. It is still used among the Arabs for a pleasant smell or odour. Eliphaz means to insinuate his desire to select the very mildest reply he could possibly meet with upon a minute research, such as, while it answered the purpose of exposing the fallacy of the patriarch's reasoning, should hurt his feelings as little as possible.[b]

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**3–5.** (3) **thou . . many,** how to bear their trials. A tribute to Job's character. **thou . . hands,**[a] Job had been a helper of the weak. (4) **thy . . falling,** as words of seasonable encouragement. **thou . . knees,**[b] he had assisted those who were bowing under the burden of life. (5) **faintest,**[c] he who had comforted others can find none for himself.

*The character of Job.*—The just man is not the mere rigidly equitable man; but the man who, under the influence of the principles of true religion, unites benevolence with righteousness, and seeks, in acts of kindness as well as of equity, to fulfil "the royal law." He is the good man, as distinguished from the merely "righteous," for whom the Apostle says "some would even dare to die." Such a character was Job; in whom righteousness and goodness appear blending in lovely practical union.[d]

**6–8.** (6) **is . . fear,** *etc.*, do thy religious fears, etc., come to this? (7) **remember,** *etc.*, sug. that Job's fainting spirits arose fr. conscious sin. (8) **even . . seen,**[a] appeal to observation. **they . . same,** a proverb.[b]

*The life of a sinner is a foolish agriculture.*—I. All human life is a sowing and a reaping. II. Life's reaping is determined by its sowing. III. The reaping of the sinner is a terrible destiny. From this subject learn—1. The great solemnity of life; 2. The conscious rectitude of the sinner's doom; 3. The necessity for a godly heart.[c]

*Note on v.* 6.—The clue to the genuine sense of this passage will be obtained by a slight transposition of the latter hemistich: "Is not this fear of thine, thy confidence; and the uprightness of thy ways, thy hope?" Job had before affirmed, chap. iii. 25, 26, "The thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me. I was not in safety, neither had I rest, neither was I quiet; yet trouble came;" *i.e.* I was continually exercised by a godly fear, a holy misgiving; I did not dare to cherish a sentiment of carnal security: even in the height of my prosperity, I was deeply sensible of my exposure to calamity, and lived habitually under a trembling anticipation of its approach. To this Eliphaz alludes; *q. d.* Here is something for which it is hard to account. "Behold, thou hast instructed many, and thou hast strengthened the weak hands. Thy words have upholden him that was falling, and thou hast strengthened the feeble knees. But now it is come upon thee, and thou faintest; it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled." How is this? Why is thy practice so much at variance with thy precepts? If thou art the man thou claimest to be; if thou hast been governed as thou allegest, by a prevailing fear of God, and hast never indulged a feeling of self-sufficient security, why is not this thy fear a source of humble confidence to thee in the day of distress? and why does not the recollection of the unimpeachable integrity and uprightness of thy ways serve as an anchor of hope amid the tossings of a tried and troubled spirit? This surely were to have been expected from one of thy character. A heart conscious of innocence could not but sustain itself in such a trial; it would be entirely contrary to the analogy of the Divine dispensations to suppose that such a one would be the victim of overwhelming judgments: for "remember, I pray thee, who ever perished being innocent? or when were the righteous cast off?" This interpretation makes

**he who had comforted others, now suffered himself**

*a* Is. xxxv. 3.

*b* He. xii. 12.

*c* He. ii. 14, 17, 18, iv. 15, 16.

"This is that which we call character, — a reserved force which acts directly by presence, and without means" — *Emerson.*

*d Dr. Wardlaw.*

**did not this suffering come from sin?**

*a* Ga. vi. 7, 8.

*b* Pr. xxii. 8; Hos. viii. 7.

*c Dr. Thomas.*

"He that planteth thorns shall not gather roses." — *Persian Prov.*

"The field of wrong brings forth death as its fruit." — *Æschylus.*

v. 8. *A. B. Evans,* 67.

"The greatest fool is he who imposes on himself, and in his greatest concern thinks certainly he knows that which he has least studied, and of which he is most profoundly ignorant." — *Shaftesbury.*

"When tried and afflicted, be persuaded that your punishment is far beneath your sin: and this will make you patient and thankful." — *Greenham.*

B.C. *cir.* 1520.

*d Bush.*

**sinners perish before the anger of God**

*a* Ac. ix. 1; Ps. xxvii. 12; 2 Sa. xxii. 16; Ps. xviii. 15. xxxiii. 6. "God has been pleased to prescribe limits to His own power, and to work His ends within those limits." — *Paley.*

*b Roberts.*

**Eliphaz's vision**

*a* "Mine ear received a whisper along with it." — *Good.* — "Mine ear caught a whisper thereof." — *Noyes.* — "My ear received secretly the pulsations of its whisper."—Vulg.

*b* Is. i. 1; Ge. ii. 21, xv. 12.

*c* So *Virgil*,—"A cold tremor ran through all their bones."—*Æn.* ii. 120.

*d Dr. Thomas.*

"The slender capacity of man's heart cannot comprehend, much less utter, that unsearchable depth and burning zeal of God's love towards us."—*Luther.*

**he saw a spirit pass before him**

*a Virgil*, *Æn.* ii. 774, iii. 48, iv. 289, xii. 868; see also the ghost's speech to Hamlet.

*vv.* 15—17. *H. Melvill*, ii. 74.

*v.* 17. *J. Fisher*, 14; *R. Morehead*, ii. 184. *Dr. R.*

the whole address of Eliphaz consistent, coherent, and clear, though founded upon the fallacy that men are invariably dealt with in this world according to their desert.[d]

**9—11.** (9) **blast**, *etc.*,[a] anger of God. ill. by fierce. hot winds of the East. (10) **the . . lion**, *etc.*, the fiercest men. here comp. to lions, cannot withstand the wrath of God. (11) **the . . prey**, *etc.*, fig. of effects of God's judgments: men who for strength, etc., may be likened to lions cannot withstand them.

*Breath of the nostrils* (*v.* 9).—When people are angry they distend their nostrils and blow with great force: the action may be taken from some animals, which, when angry, blow violently through their noses. Of a man who is much given to anger, it is said, "That fellow is always blowing through his nose." "You may blow through your nose for a thousand years, it will never injure me." "Go not near the breath of his nostrils, he will injure you."[b]

**12—14.** (12) **secretly**, *marg.* **ear . . thereof**, as a whisper.[a] (13) **thoughts**, of a conflicting kind. **visions . . men**,[b] com. mode of Divine communication in the old time. (14) **came . . me**, *marg.* **trembling**, LXX. shuddering, horror. **made . . shake**,[c] *marg.*

*Fellowship with the unseen.*—Whatever the nature of this vision, the three following propositions which it suggests would be true. I. That man has a capacity to hold intercourse with the spiritual world. The existence of such a world is one of the fundamental faiths of humanity. II. That man's character places him in a humble position in the spiritual world. The address of the spirit significantly expresses man's moral inferiority. III. That man's earthly state is but a temporary separation from a conscious existence in the spiritual world. This body is spoken of as a house. It is not me. it is only my dwelling. Several things are suggested about this departure into the conscious existence in the spiritual world. 1. It is inevitable; 2. It is constantly progressing; 3. It is frequently disregarded; 4. This departure terminates earthly glory.[d]—*The mysterious visitant.*—Eliphaz gives an account of—I. What he felt. II. What he saw. Concerning this spirit the following particulars are stated. 1. Its proximity; 2. Its stationary position; 3. Its indistinctness: 4. The terror was increased by the silence. III. What he heard. A vindication of the Divine character. 1. His justice; 2. His holiness; 3. His independence and self-sufficiency; 4. His wisdom.

**15—17.** (15) **spirit**, the shadowy form of some supernatural being. **hair . . up**, a well-known effect of profound fear.[a] (16) **but . . thereof**, it was shadowy. indistinct. **voice**, LXX. gentle breeze, whisper. (17) **mortal**, feeble. **be . . God.** more correct in his estimate of himself; and in deciding what his lot should be. **shall . . maker?** and imagine holiness where God may see sin.

*Eliphaz reproves Job.*—In the course of his reproof, Eliphaz mentions a revelation which he had received from heaven. This revelation we shall now consider abstractedly. I. The truths intended to be made known were these. 1. That no man is pure before God; 2. That no man can claim anything at the hands of God; 3. That no man under any circumstances can have

reason to complain of God. II. As tending to decide the controversy between Job and his friends. Consider it—1. As it was applied by Eliphaz; 2. As it ought to have been applied. Learn:—(1) Be thankful to God for the written Word; (2) Bear in mind the infinite distance between you and your Maker."

*Note on v.* 15.—This refers to the great fear of Job; but the same effect is often ascribed to great joy. Thus, in Hindoo books, in describing the ecstasy of gods or men, it is often said, "The hair of their flesh stood erect." A father says to his absent child, "My son, not having seen your lotus face for so long, my hair stands up with joy."[c]

**18. 19.** (18) **servants,** *i.e.* the angels. **and . . folly,**[a] God is so exalted in power and holiness, that even angels, so superior to men, are immeasurably beneath Him. (19) **how . . clay,** *etc.*, how much more may this be said of men, than of angels! **which . . moth,** whose life may be taken by the most feeble of all creatures.

*Man's inferiority to angels.*—**I.** The habitation they occupy is mean and obscure. II. They are exposed to all kinds of destructive influences. III. Their departure is felt but little by society at large. IV. While their end is but little heeded by others, they are destitute of what is of most importance to themselves,—wisdom.[b]

*The moth* (*v.* 19).—It is probable that this means a moth-worm, which is one state of the creature alluded to. It is first enclosed in an egg, from whence it issues a worm, and after a time becomes a complete insect, or moth. The following extracts from Niebuhr may throw light on the passage, that man is crushed by so feeble a thing as a worm:—"A disease very common in Yemen is the attack of the Guiney-worm, or the *Vena-Medinensis* it is called by the physicians of Europe. The disease is supposed to be occasioned by the use of putrid waters, which people are obliged to drink in several parts of Yemen; and for this reason the Arabians always pass water, with the nature of which they are unacquainted, through a linen cloth, before drinking it. Where one unfortunately swallows any of the eggs of this insect, no immediate consequence follows; but after a considerable time, the worm begins to show itself through the skin. Our physician, Mr. Cramer, was, within a few days of his death, attacked by five of these worms at once, although this was more than five month after we had left Arabia. In the isle of Karek I saw a French officer named Le Page, who, after a long and difficult journey performed on foot, and in an Indian dress, between Pondicherry and Surat, through the heart of India, was busy extracting a worm out of his body. He supposed that he had got it by drinking bad water in the country of the Mahrattas. This disorder is not dangerous if the person affected can extract the worm without breaking it. With this view it is rolled on a small bit of wood as it comes out of the skin. It is slender as a thread, and two or three feet long. It gives no pain as it makes its way out of the body, unless what may be occasioned by the care which must be taken of it for some weeks. If unluckily it be broken, it then returns into the body, and the most disagreeable consequences ensue, palsy, a gangrene, and sometimes death."[c]

**20, 21.** (20) **they . . evening,** man's life is a short day,

B.C. *circ.* 1520.

*Parkinson, Huls. Lec.* 7.

*b C. Simeon, M.A.*

"Friendship is the shadow of the evening, which strengthens with the setting sun of life."—*La Fontaine.*

*c Roberts.*

**the greatness of God**

*a* 2 Pe. ii. 4.

*v.* 18. *Dr. J. Donne*, i. 428.

*b Hom. Com.*

"Man is but a little thing in the midst of the objects of nature, yet, by the moral quality radiating from his countenance, he may abolish all considerations of magnitude, and, in his manners, equal the majesty of the world."—*Emerson.*

"Man, if he compare himself with all that he can see, is at the zenith of his power; but if he compare himself with all he can conceive, he is at the nadir of weakness."—*Colton.*

"Aromatic plants bestow no spicy fragrance while they grow; but, crushed or trodden to the ground, diffuse their balmy sweets around."—*Goldsmith.*

*c Burder.*

**the weakness of man**

B C. *cir.* 1520.

during which the work of decay is proceeding. **they . . it,** the living are unaffected by the work of death around them. (21) **doth . . away,**[a] their titles, wealth, etc., leave them. **they . . wisdom,**[b] they pass away bef. they know much; many bef. they become wise to salvation.

## *CHAPTER THE FIFTH.*

**1, 2.** (1) **call . . thee,** if God does not answer, who will? **saints,**[a] holy ones, angels.[b] (2) **wrath,** *i.e.* of God; the more excited by an appeal to any but Him. **envy,** of any lot save one's own. **foolish . . silly,** *foolish* to think any can hear and answer prayer but God; *silly* to imagine any lot is without trial; or any other really better for us than our own.

*The folly and effects of fretting against God.*—I. It is the part only of fools to fret against God and His procedure. II. Fretting against God's dealings brings its own punishment. 1. It robs of peace, which is the spirit's life; 2. Affects the health and hastens death; 3. Injures the life and property of the soul; 4. Brings greater chastening and punishment from God. Note—Passion and impatience in trouble are more hurtful and crushing than the trouble itself.[c]

*Envy* (*v.* 2).—There once sailed from the city of New Orleans, in America, a large and noble steam-vessel, freighted with cotton, and having many passengers on board. While the cargo was being embarked, a portion of it became slightly moistened by a shower of rain then falling. This circumstance, however, was not noticed,—the cotton being closely packed, and the hatchways fastened down. During the first part of the voyage all went well, but in the middle of the Atlantic the ship's crew were suddenly alarmed by a fearful cry of fire, and in a few moments the noble vessel was enveloped in flames. The damp and closely-packed cotton had become heated, daily smouldering and getting in a more dangerous state, until at last it burst out into a broad sheet of flame, solely from the effects of spontaneous combustion. The passengers and crew were soon compelled to take to the boats; some were consumed or suffocated in the flames, and many more drowned in the sea. The heated cotton smouldering in the hold of this vessel aptly illustrates the condition of that man who harbours resentment and envy in his breast; it gradually stifles all the better feelings of his nature; obtains the complete mastery over his spirit,—then bursts forth into acts of violence, and leads him to the commission of deeds the very thought of which, at another time, would compel him to shudder and start with horror.[d]

**3—5.** (3) **taking root,** outwardly prospering. **but . . habitation,**[a] when it was seen that his prosperity was not founded on right and truth. (4) **his . . safety,**[b] they are involved in their father's ruin. **crushed,**[c] broken in pieces. **gate,**[d] in court of justice there held. Their quarrelsome, litigious spirit here suggested. **neither . . them,** they are not pitied nor aided. (5) **harvest,** substance. **the . . up,** there being none to take the part of the owner. **taketh . . thorns,** the hedge being broken through.[e] **robber,** Heb. snare; all. to crafty spoilers.

*The prosperity of the ungodly.*—The ungodly frequently prosper

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**who will answer prayer if God does not?**

*a* xv. 15; Zec. xiv. 5; Ps. lxxxix. 5, 7; Da. iv. 13.

*b* "It may be inferred fr. this pas. that the invocation of saints or angels was not unknown, but Eliphaz distinctly affirms its inutility when a man is not reconciled to God; and if he were, it would, of course, be needless."—*Spk. Com.*

*c Homiletic Com.*

*v.* 1. *D. S. Ayling, Obs.* i. 142.

*v.* 2. *Dr. J. Lambe, A Ser.* 1695.

Cyrus, the Persian king, was accustomed to say, that did men but know the cares he had to sustain, he thought no man would wish to wear his crown.

*d Clement.*

**the end of the wicked is misery**

*a* Ps. lxix. 25; lxxiii. 3, 17, 18.

*b* Ex. xx. 5.

*c* Pr. xxii. 20.

*d* xxix. 7, xxxi. 21.

*e* But see *Land and Bk.* 348.

in this life. God may have wise reasons for permitting them to prosper. 1. It exercises the faith and patience of the godly; 2. Teaches the great inferiority of earthly to heavenly blessings; 3. Confirms the truth of a judgment to come. Note:—The godly are too much loved to receive their portion in this life. The good things of this life are only the bones cast to dogs.*f*

*Half-starved Arabs.*—This is a manifest allusion to the half-starved Arabs of the desert, who were always ready for plunder, as their descendants are to this day. Such starvelings are thus described by Volney:—"These men are smaller, leaner, and blacker than any of the Bedouins yet known; their wasted legs had only tendons without calves; their belly was glued to their back. In general, the Bedouins are small, lean and swarthy,—more so, however, in the bosom of the desert than on the borders of the cultivated country. They are ordinarily about five feet two inches high. They seldom have more than about six ounces of food for the whole day. Six or seven dates, soaked in melted butter, a little milk or curd, serve a man for twenty-four hours; and he seems happy when he can add a small portion of coarse flour or little ball of rice. Their camels, also, which are their chief support, are remarkably meagre, living on the meanest and most scanty provision. Nature has given it a small head, without ears, at the end of a long neck, without flesh: she has taken from its legs and thighs every muscle not immediately requisite for motion: and, in short, has bestowed on its withered body only the vessels and tendons necessary to connect its frame together: she has furnished it with a strong jaw, that it may grind the hardest aliments: and, lest it should consume too much, she has straightened its stomach, and obliged it to chew the cud."*g*

**6, 7.** (6) **affliction .. dust,**[a] **is not** accidental, but fruit of wickedness.[b] (7) **sparks,** *lit.* **children of** flame, or sons of the coal.

*Trouble.*—I. Its origin. 1. It is from a necessity and law imposed on our existence in this world; 2. From sin, which is the ground of that necessity. In the government of a good and righteous God suffering could exist only—1. As a legal necessity in consequence of disobedience to His laws; or, 2. As a moral necessity for the discipline of His erring children. II. Its universality. Tears moisten the pillow of down as well as the pallet of straw. This ought to render us—1. Patient under our own trouble; 2. Sympathising with that of others. III. Its certainty. 1. The hand that made us has, since the entrance of sin, made us sufferers; 2. Only through the incarnation and suffering of the Son of Man, our sufferings are not eternal.*c*

*Sons of the burning coal* (*v.* 7).—Hebrew, "Sons of the burning coal." The word son, among the Hindoos, is applied to man, and all kinds of animal life. Men of ignoble parentage are called sons of the *kaddekal*, *i.e.* the mechanics. When animals, reptiles, or insects are troublesome, they are called *passasinundia-maggal*, sons of the devil; or *vease-maggal*, sons of the prostitute, or of the treacherous ones. See the ploughman at his occupation; should the bullocks prove restive, he immediately vociferates the epithets alluded to. Listen to the almost breathless cowherd, who is running after some of his refractory kine to bring them to the fold, and he abuses them in the most coarse and indelicate language. The man also who for the first time discovers the

B.C. *cir.* 1520.

*f Rutherford.*

"It is one of the worst effects of prosperity to make a man a vortex instead of a fountain, so that, instead of throwing out, he learns only to draw in."—*Beecher.*

"Everything in the world may be endured except only a succession of prosperous days."—*Goethe.*

The more the diamond is cut, the more it sparkles; the heavier the cross is, the heavier is the saint's crown.

*g Burder.*

**man is born to trouble**

*a* Ge. iii. 17—19.

*b* "Eliphaz leaves Job to make the application of this, and other sayings of his, to himself."—*Wordsworth.*

*c Hom. Com.*

*vv.* 6, 7. *Dr J. Collinge's Providence*, 503; *Sir M. Hale's Wks.* i. 200; *Dr S. Clarke*, vi. 227, *ff.*; *A. Bolty.* ii. 135; *P. Webb*, i. 33; *G. Carr*, i. 197; *Bp. Ravenscroft*, ii. 514.

*v.* 6. *Dr. Gibbons*, 319; *J. Brougham*, i. 249.

*v.* 7. *T. Boston. Fam. Inv.* iii. 1; *W. B. Kirwan*, 379.

B.C. *cir.* 1520.

*d Roberts.*

**the greatness and goodness of God**

*a* Ps. xxxvii. 5; 2 Ch. xxxiii. 12.
*b* Ps. cxxxvi. 4; Ex. xv. 11.
*c* Ro. xi. 33.
*d* Je. v. 24; Ac. xiv. 17; Ps. lxv. 9, 10.
*e* Ps. cxiii. 7; Lu. i. 52; Ja. iv. 6, 10.
*f Hom. Com.* "The Apostle, speaking of persecuted saints, saith, 'They took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing that they have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.' And thus David (as once his Jonathan) tastes honey from the top of the rod: 'Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me;' not only God's staff to support him, but even His rod to chastise and correct him, were sweet and comfortable to him." — *Bp. Hopkins.*
*g J. Montgomery.*

**by His knowledge He overrules the affairs of men**

*a* Ne. iv. 15; Ps. xxi. 11; Pr. xxi. 30.
*b* Ps. vii. 15, 16; Es. ix. 25; Da. vi. 24.
*c* Pr iii. 32.
*d Spk. Com.*
*e* Pr. iv. 19; De. xxviii. 29; Is. lix. 10.
"I would bring balm and pour it into your wound, cure your distempered mind and heal your fortunes."— *Dryden*

white ants destroying his property bawls out with all his might, "Ah! *vease-maggal*, sons of the prostitute."[d]

**8—11.** (8) **I,** emphatic. "I however." **seek,**[a] in humble prayer. not sinfully complain. (9) **unsearchable,**[b] whose purpose in affliction needs searching out. and must be beneficent. **marvellous,**[c] and dif., in relation to results. fr. what might be expected. (10) **rain** [d] not liked. sometimes, by the thoughtless. (11) **set . . low,**[e] this the end of God's care and dealings.

*Comfort in trouble.*—Our great comfort in trouble is that we can address God in it. He should be sought unto in trouble—1. For counsel and direction in it; 2. For comfort and support under it; 3. For grace so to bear it as to glorify God by it; 4. For deliverance in His own time and way out of it; 5. For the spiritual benefit and improvement intended through it. Note—(1) It is true wisdom and piety to commit our cause into God's hands. Note—(2) The attributes of God are such as to render Him the proper object of prayer and trust in the time of trouble.[f]

*Purification of affliction.*—

He that from dross would win the precious ore,
Bends o'er the crucible an earnest eye,
The subtle searching process to explore,
Lest the one brilliant moment should pass by
When, in the molten silver's virgin mass,
He meets his pictured face as in a glass.

Thus in God's furnace are His people tried;
Thrice happy they who to the end endure.
But who the fiery trial may abide?
Who from the crucible come forth so pure
That He whose eyes of flame look through the whole,
May see His image perfect in the soul?

Nor with an evanescent glimpse alone,
As in that mirror the refiner's face;
But, stampt with heaven's broad signet, there be shown
Immanuel's features, full of truth and grace:
And round that seal of love this motto be,
"Not for a moment, but—eternity!"[g]

**12—14.** (12) **he . . crafty,**[a] true in principle, but not applicable to Job. **enterprise,** that wh. seems dictated by practical sagacity. (13) **taketh . . craftiness,**[b] Providence is against an overreaching worldly policy. **counsel . . headlong,**[c] "hurried on by seeming success."[d] (14) **they . . daytime,** *etc.*,[e] bewildered by the failure of their plans; and things turning out so dif. fr. their expectations.

*The Divine attributes.*—I. His almightiness (*v.* 9). His works of providence unsearchable. 1. In the end designed in them; 2. In the manner of its accomplishment. II. His goodness and benevolence (*v.* 10). III. His wisdom (*vv.* 12—14). IV. His compassion (*vv.* 14, 15).

*Comfort in times of trouble.*—

Hast thou gone sadly thro' a dreary night,
And found no light;
No guide, no star, to cheer thee through the plain—
No friend save pain?
Wait, and thy soul shall see, when most folorn,
Rise a new morn.

Hast thou beneath another's stern control
Bent thy sad soul,
And wasted sacred hopes and precious tears?
Yet calm thy fears,
For thou canst gain, even from the bitterest part,
A stronger heart!
Has fate o'erwhelmed thee with some sudden blow?
Let thy tears flow;
But know, when storms are past, the heavens appear
More pure, more clear;
And hope, when furthest from their shining rays,
For brighter days.
Hast thou found nought within thy troubled life
Save inward strife?
Hast thou found all he promised thee deceit,
And hope a cheat?
Endure, and there shall dawn within thy breast
Eternal rest.*f*

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"Your comfort comes, as in droughts the elemental dew does on the earth; it wets, but leaves no moisture, to give the sear'd plants growth."—*Glapthorne.*

"Comfort, like the golden sun, dispels the sullen shade with her sweet influence, and cheers the melancholy house of care."—*Rowe.*

*f Household Wds.*

**15, 16.** (15) **saveth . . sword,**[a] in the worst times those who trust in Him are safe, even though poor and without human friends. **mouth,**[b] their words may be as sharp swords. (16) **so . . hope,** without wh. they would be poor indeed; hope is wealth. **and . . mouth,**[c] a false, treacherous, slanderous mouth.

*The compassion of God.*—This, as suggested by the passage, is of two parts. I. Goodness exercised towards men in general. II. His compassion towards the poor (*v.* 16). Such have encouragement to hope—1. From the actual results of God's dealings with them; 2. Persecution and oppression often struck dumb—(*a*) By God's manifest deliverance of the poor that trusted in Him; (*b*) By His judgments on the wicked executed along with that deliverance (Ex. xiv. 25). God's works will put the ungodly to silence when His words do not.

*True compassion* (*v.* 16).—A violent Welsh squire, having taken offence at a poor curate who employed his leisure hours in mending clocks and watches, applied to the Bishop of St. Asaph, with a formal complaint against him of impiously carrying on a trade, contrary to the statute. His lordship, having heard the complaint, told the squire he might depend upon the strictest justice being done in the case; accordingly the mechanic-divine was sent for a few days after, when the bishop asked him how he dared disgrace his diocese by becoming a mender of clocks and watches. The curate, with all humility, answered, "To satisfy the wants of a wife and ten children." "That won't do with me," rejoined the prelate; "I will inflict such a punishment upon you, as will make you leave off your pitiful trade, I promise you;" and immediately calling in his secretary, ordered him to make out a presentation for the astonished curate to a living of at least one hundred and fifty pounds per annum.

**God is the friend of the poor**

*a* Ps. xxxv. 10.

*b* Ps. xvii 10, 13, lvii. 4, lix. 7.

*c* Ps. lxiii. 11.

"Though affliction, at the first, doth vex most virtuous natures, from the sense that 'tis unjustly laid; yet, when the amazement which that new pain brings is worn away, they then embrace oppression straight, with such obedient cheerfulness, as if it came from heaven, not man."—*Davenant.*

"Purchase not friends by gifts: when thou ceasest to give, such will cease to love."—*Fuller.*

**17, 18.** (17) **happy,** fortunate. **correcteth,**[a] instead of letting him alone. **therefore . . Lord,** try rather to learn the lesson. (18) **for . . sore,** as the first effect of chastisement on the heart and mind. **and . . up,**[b] He does not leave the sore to heal of itself. **he . . hands,** the same hands hold the rod and the ointment.

**the happy result of Divine corrections**

*a* Ps. xciv. 12; Pr. iii. 12; Re. iii. 19; He. xii 5.

*b* De. xxxii. 39;

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Heb. vi. 1; Ps. cxlvii. 3.

*c Dr. Ryland.*

v. 17. *J. Penn*, i. 77; *B. Hill*, i. 49.

"I fear God, and next to God, I chiefly fear him who fears Him not."—*Saadi.*

"O there is nought on earth worth being known but God and our own souls."—*Bailey.*

"Perfumes, the more they're chafed, the more they render their pleasant scents; and so affliction expresseth virtue fully, whether true or else adulterate."—*Webster.*

"When afflicted, love can allow thee to groan, but not to grumble."—*Gurnall.*

*d A. Farindon.*

*The benefits of affliction.*—I. Men in times of prosperity are apt to indulge erroneous notions, and neglect important truths. II. God often employs afflictions to correct our mistaken ideas, and rectify our foolish propensities. III. When these ends are answered, He who has been most severely chastened may well think himself most happy.[c]

*The wrath of God.*—Delivered He was, not to despair, for that was impossible; nor to the torments of hell, which could never seize on His innocent soul: but to the wrath of God, which withered His heart like grass, "burnt up His bones like a hearth," and "brought Him even to the dust of death." Look now upon His countenance—it is pale and wan; upon His heart—it is melted like wax; upon His tongue—it cleaveth to the roof of His mouth. What talk we of death? The wrath of God is truly the terriblest thing in this world—the sting of sin, which is the sting of death. . . . . Alas! to us, God's wrath doth not appear in its full horror; for if it did, we should sooner die than offend Him. Some do but think of it; few think of it as they should; and they that are most apprehensive look upon it as at a distance, as that which may be turned away; and so, not fearing God's wrath, "treasure up wrath against the day of wrath." To us, when we take it at the nearest and have the fullest sight of it, it appeareth but as the cloud did to Elijah's servant, "like a man's hand;" but to Christ "the heavens were black with clouds and wind," and it showered down upon Him as in a tempest of fire and brimstone. We have not His eyes, and therefore not His apprehension. We see not so much deformity in sin as He did, and not so much terror in the wrath of God. . . . God in His approaches of justice, when He cometh towards the sinner to correct him, may seem to go, like the consuls of Rome, with His rods and His axes carried before Him. Many sinners have felt His rods: and His rod is comfort; His frown, favour; His anger, love; and His blow, a benefit. But Christ was struck as it were with His axe. Others have trembled under His wrath, but Christ was even consumed by the stroke of His hand.[d]

**God is a great deliverer**

**19—21.** (19) **six . . seven,** *etc.*,[a] God is never tired with helping His people, or wearied by their prayers; of course, *six* and *seven* are not to be taken literally. (20) **famine,** one of *four* great troubles here specified; war, slander, ruin, are the others. (21) **hid . . tongue,** *etc.*,[b] what scourge is greater?

*a* Ps. xci. 5—7, xxxiii. 18, 19; Ge. xlv. 7; 1 Ki. xvii. 6, 15, 16; Lc. xxvi. 6; Ez. xxxiv. 25; Is. lxv. 25, xxxv. 9; Da. vi. 22.

*b* Ps. xxxi. 20.

"By examining the tongue of a patient, physicians find out the diseases of the body, and philosophers the diseases of the mind."—*Justin.*

"A tart temper never mellows

*Homiletic hints on vv.* 19—21.—Deliverance promised not in one or two troubles, but in all. Every new trouble needs Divine support and guidance. Preservation in trouble, support under it, and deliverance out of it, all in the believer's charter. The time and mode of deliverance best reserved in God's own hands. Here trouble succeeds trouble, as wave succeeds wave. One past, we are to prepare for another. God either gives His people what He promised or something better.—*The security of God's people.*—This text has reference to the promises. We shall endeavour—I. To explain them. 1. They are great and comprehensive; 2. They must be understood with limitations and restrictions. II. To confirm them. The whole Scriptures bear testimony to the truth of them. Search—1. The law; 2. The prophets; 3. The New Testament. Convinced of the truth of these promises, we are now only concerned—III. To improve them. They teach

us—1. Submission in trials; 2. Confidence in supplications; 3. Activity in obedience.[c]

*The scourge of the tongue* (*v.* 21).—Dr. A. Clarke says, "the Targum refers this to the incantations of Balaam: from the injury by the tongue of Balaam thou shalt be hidden." The people live in great fear of the scourge of the tongue, and that independent of an incantation, because they believe the tongues of some men have the power of inflicting a dreadful curse on any object which has incurred their displeasure. Thus, many of the evils of life are believed to come from *nā-vooru*—the curse or the scourge of the tongue. "Have you heard what Kandan's tongue has done for Muttoo?" "No! what has happened?" "Why, some time ago, Muttoo promised on his next voyage to bring Kandan a cargo of rice, but he did not keep his word; Kandan, therefore, became very angry, and said, 'I shall not be surprised at hearing of thy vessel being wrecked.' Muttoo again sailed, without caring for Kandan's tongue; but lo! his vessel has been knocked to pieces on the rocks, and I saw him this morning on his way home, beating his head, and exclaiming, 'Ah! this *nā-vooru*, *nā-vooru*, this evil tongue, this evil tongue; my vessel has gone to pieces on the rocks.'" But the tongues of some men are believed to possess malignant power, not only in imprecations, but also in their blessings and praises. "The other day, when I and some others were sitting with our friend the doctor, one of his daughters came to speak to her father; as she was delivering her message, one of the party exclaimed, 'What a beautiful set of teeth!' and from that moment they began to decay." "Alas! alas! poor old Murager purchased a fine milch cow yesterday, and was driving her along the road this morning, on his way home, when, behold, a fellow met them, and said, 'Ah, what large teats!' The cow broke from the string, she rushed to the hedge, and a stake ran through her udder." "Ah, what a miserable man is Valen! a few days ago, as his wife was nursing the infant, he said, 'How comely art thou, my fawn!' when immediately a cancer made its appearance in her breast, from which she can never recover."[d]

**22—24.** (22) **at . . laugh,**[a] shall be not only calm, but rejoicing. (23) **thou . . field,** industry with God's blessing will overcome natural effects of sterility of soil. **beasts . . thee,**[b] some will fear; others serve thee. (24) **tabernacle,**[c] tent, dwelling. **and . . sin,** or shall not miss anything.

*Importance of domestic happiness.*—I. This appears from the unavoidable intimacy and extent of its influence on human comfort. II. It is a blessing equally attainable by all classes of persons, and which may be enjoyed not occasionally only, but every day that we live. III. By the multiplied and wide-spread mischiefs which daily result from its absence. IV. Its essential and unavoidable influence on the Church of God. V. The more general and perfect domestic happiness is, the more pure, harmonious, and happy will be the community at large. Note—1. The folly of those who undervalue the happiness of the domestic circle, and are constantly seeking happiness elsewhere; 2. It is worth while to take the greatest and most constant pains to secure this happiness.[d]

*The friendship of the beasts* (*v.* 23).—In a country where wild beasts are so numerous and so fierce, and where the natives have

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with age; and a sharp tongue is the only edge-tool that grows keener with constant use."—*W. Irving.*

c *C. Simeon, M.A.*

"Give not thy tongue too great a liberty, lest it take thee prisoner. A word unspoken, is like a sword in the scabbard, thine; if vented, thy sword is in another's hand. If thou desire to be heard wise, be so wise as to hold thy tongue."—*Quarles.*

"If any man think it a small matter, or of mean concernment, to bridle his tongue, he is much mistaken; for it is a point to be silent when occasion requires, and better than to speak, though never so well."—*Plutarch.*

d *Roberts.*

**those whom God befriends may laugh at calamity**

*a* 2 Ki. xix. 21.

*b* Ho. ii. 18

c De. xxviii. 6.

*d Dr S. Miller.* *v.* 23. *W. Howell, Sers.* 1835. *v.* 24. *W. Jay*, i. 1. "It is indeed at home that every man must be known by those who would make a just estimate either of his virtue or felicity; for smiles and embroidery are alike occasional, and the mind is often

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dressed for show in painted honour and fictitious benevolence."—*Johnson.*

*e Roberts.*

such shall have prosperity and long life

*a* ie. xv. 15.
*b Spk. Com.*
c ie. xxv. 8, xxxv. 29; Pr. x. 27.
*d* Threshing-floors were usually on hills. Jud. vi. 8; 2 Sa. xxiv. 18.
"So mayest thou live, till, like ripe fruits, thou drop into thy mother's lap; or be with ease gathered, not harshly plucked; for death mature."—*Milton.*
*e* "Eliphaz is confident that no man of sense can come to any other conclusion."—*Spk. Com.*
*f J. Flavel.*
*g* 26. *Dr. W. Harris*, 134; *Dr. T. Gibbons*, 349; *S. Lavington*, i. 368.
In 1840 there were fifteen persons in Belgium above 100 years of age, of whom 9 were women. One of these, Maria Theresa Mayer of Antwerp, was 104 years old, of the others, Maria Ann Stafsin, and Catherine Abrinth, of Luxemburg, were above 150 years old.
*g Dr. Good.*

so few means of defence, can it be a matter of surprise that people on a journey are always under the influence of great fear? The father says to his son, when he is about to depart, "Fear not; the beasts will be thy friends." The dealer in charms says, when giving one of his potent spells, "Be not afraid, young man; this shall make the cruel beasts respect thee."[e]

**25—27.** (25) **thou . . great** *etc.*,[a] "it must have sounded like a bitter mockery, and as such he resents it."[b] (26) **thou . . age,** like the patriarchs.[c] **cometh,** goeth up.[d] (27) **hear . . good,** *see marg.*[e]

*Homiletic hints on v.* 26.—When the corn is near ripe it bows the head, and stoops lower than when it was green. When the people of God are near ripe for heaven, they grow more humble and self-denying than in the days of their first profession. The longer a saint grows in this world, the better he is still acquainted with his own heart and his obligations to God; both which are very humbling things. Paul had one foot in heaven, when he called himself the "chief of sinners." When corn is dead ripe, it is apt to fall of its own accord to the ground, and there shed; whereby it doth, as it were, anticipate the harvestman, and call upon him to put in the sickle. Not unlike to which are the lookings and longings, the groanings and hastenings of ready Christians to their expected glory; they hasten to the coming of the Lord.[f]

*Coming to the grave as a shock of corn.*—Literally, "in dried up," or "shrivelled age;" and hence the term here employed is applied by the Arabians to designate the winter season, in which everything is corrugated or shrivelled. On which account some commentators propose that the text should be rendered "in the winter of life;" poetically, indeed, but not thoroughly consistent with the metaphor of a shock of corn: which, in close congruity with the emblematic picture of winter, at its season of maturity, is dried up and contracted, and thus far offers an equal similitude of ripe old age; but which forcibly increases the similitude by the well-known fact, that, like ripe old age also, it must be committed to the earth in order to spring to newness of life; for, in both cases, "the seed which thou sowest shall not quicken except it die." Tyndal has given the passage thus: "In a fayre age lyke as the corn sheewes are broughte into the barne in due season:" whence Sandys,

> "Then, full of days, like weighty shocks of corn,
> In season reaped, shalt to thy grave be borne."

Nor very differently Schultens, notwithstanding that he admits that the Hebrew in itself implies "congestion, accumulation, or heaping together." 'Intrabis in decrepitâ senectute ad tumulum,' "Thou shalt enter into the tomb in decrepit age:' meaning, as a shock of corn enters into the barn.[g]

## *CHAPTER THE SIXTH.*

Job's reply

he wishes that his sorrow

**1, 2.** (1) **answered,** meeting the arguments in order. (2) **grief,** or wrath. **weighed . . balances,** a com. fig. with E. and classical writers. We often speak of weighing thoughts, words, deeds: and of such things as "weighty," or "light."

*Man's character is estimated by an enlightened natural religionist.*—Eliphaz was a natural religionist. I. He regarded the fact that a man suffered as a proof of his wickedness. To judge a man's character by his external circumstances is a most flagrant mistake, for—1. Suffering is not necessarily connected with sin: 2. It seems almost necessary to the human creature in this world; 3. As a fact it has a salutary influence on the character of the good. II. He regarded the murmuring of a man under suffering, as a proof of his wickedness. In this complaining spirit Eliphaz discovers—1. Hypocrisy; 2. Ignorance of God.[b]—*Great suffering.*—Job's suffering was—I. Unappreciated by men. 1. It was unutterable; 2. It was irrepressible. II. Misunderstood by friends. Hence the address of Eliphaz was—1. Utterly insipid; 2. Truly offensive. III. Intolerable to himself. But though his life was unbearable—1. He would not take it away; 2. He was not forgetful of his relation to his Maker; 3. He knew it could not last long; 4. He was conscious of an inner strength.

*The building up of character.*—I have around my little cabin in the country a dozen or so of rhododendrons. Broad-leaved fellows they are. I love them in blossom, and I love them out of blossom. They make me think of many Christians. They are like some that are in this church. Usually they come up in the spring and blossom the first thing, just as many persons come into Christian life. The whole growth of the plants is crowded into two or three weeks, and they develop with wonderful rapidity; but after that they will not grow another inch during the whole summer. What do they do? I do not know, exactly; they never told me; but I suspect that they are organising inwardly, and rendering permanent that which they have gained. What they have added to growth in the spring they take the rest of the season to solidify, to consolidate, to perfect, by chemical evolutions; and when autumn comes, the year's increase is so tough that, when the tender plants that laughed at them, and chided them, and accused them of being lazy, are laid low by the frost, there stand my rhododendrons, holding out their green leaves, and saying to November and December, "I am here as well as you." And they are as green to-day as they were before the winter set in. Now, I like Christians that grow fast this spring, and hold on through the summer, and next spring grow again. I like Christians that, having grown for a time, stop and organise what they have gained, and then start again. I like periodicity in Christian growth. And that reproach which Christians so often heap upon themselves and each other, because they are not constant and steady in their development, frequently arises from a want of knowledge of the method by which God builds up human character.[c]

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**were duly considered**

*a* In the Egyptian ritual the day of weighing words is a com. term for the day of judgment.

*b Dr. Thomas.*

"'Ah! my lord, could you weigh my poverty, I am sure you would relieve me.' 'The sorrows of that man's soul, who can weigh them?' 'Alas! if my sorrows could be weighed, then would pity be shown unto me.'" —*Roberts.*

"An English barrister, who was accustomed to train students for the practice of law, and who was not himself a religious man, was once asked why he put students, from the very first, to the study and analysis of the most difficult parts of the sacred Scriptures. 'Because,' said he, 'there is nothing else like it, in any language, for the development of mind and character.'" —*Dr. Haven.*

*c H. W. Beecher*

**3, 4.** (3) **sand . . sea,** prov. expres. for what cannot be numbered or measured.[a] **words . . up,** as a stone is hidden by the ocean, so his words—if blamable—were covered by his great calamity. (4) **arrows,**[b] *see* Homily. **set . . me,**[c] assail me in battle-array.

**the greatness of his grief may excuse his words**

*a* Pr. xxvii. 3.

*b* De. xxxii. 23; Ps. xxxviii. 3, xci. 5; Ez. v. 16; Zec. ix. 14.

*The arrows of the Almighty.*—Our sufferings are very much as we are made to view them. Job describes these sufferings according to his views and feelings. I. As arrows, sharp, penetrating; coming swiftly, suddenly, and with great force; not one, but

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many, coming in great succession. II. Arrows of the Almighty. They must be especially sharp and deadly. III. Poisoned arrows—hence especially deadly, and the painful character of his sufferings. IV. These arrows are not only discharged against him, but abiding with him, or being with him. His distress unintermitting. V. The effect of these arrows—drinking up his spirit. VI. No power of men or angel able to withstand these arrows. Note:—Satan working on our unbelief in the time of trouble, is able to make his own arrows to be mistaken for those of the Almighty.[d]

*Poisoned arrows* (*v.* 4).—The practice of using poisoned arrows is universal among the interior nations of Southern Africa, to whom the Gospel has not reached. The strongest of all the poisons used is that which has been discovered by the most uncivilised of all the nations, the wild Bushmen; a wound from which is attended with great pain and thirst while the poison is working throughout the system, and attended with great depression. I brought some of the poison with me to England, to see if any antidote against it could be discovered. It has exactly the appearance of black wax, and is found deposited in sheltered corners of rocks, but how it came there is yet unknown. A medical gentleman, who had devoted much attention to the different kinds of known poisons, after delivering some lectures in London on that particular subject, heard of the Bushman poison, and applied to me to furnish him with some of it, that he might analyse it, and endeavour to find out an antidote. I rejoiced that the matter had fallen into such good hands, and immediately forwarded it by post. I received different letters, containing various experiments, but all had failed. I remember the first trial he made of the power of the poison was, by wetting the point of a needle, and, after dipping it into the powder, pricking a bird with it, which died almost immediately. The same experiment was made on a second bird, while some antidote was immediately applied to counteract the effects of the poison. After a short time it also died. Various antidotes were tried in the same way, but all proved equally ineffectual.[e]

**5—7.** (5) **ass . . ox,** even such are contented when free fr. pain. (6) **unsavoury . . salt,**[a] much less can food be taken when bitter or poisonous. **taste . . egg,** sug. that poultry was kept at that time.[b] (7) **things . . food,** that is sorrow was his daily food.[c]

*Human conditions account for human complaints.*—The deepest poverty is to be without a friend to sympathise with us in our sufferings. Job reasserts his sad condition (*v.* 6). Learn:—1. Painful reverses to be prepared for; 2. Moderation and humility our duty in prosperity; 3. The uncertainty of earthly possessions and enjoyments to be improved to the securing of heavenly ones.

*Sorrowful meat* (*v.* 7).—While the Chinese are mourning for the death of a father or mother, they eat the meanest and most unsavoury food. This is done in compliance with very ancient rules, which forbid the son or the daughter to taste any pleasure while they are endeavouring to show their esteem for the dead by the outward garbs of mourning. "Sorrowful meat," or "the bread of mourners," means, in Chinese acceptation, any kind of food which has no pleasant taste, and such as is eaten merely to

c Mk. xiv. 34; 2 Co. v. 11.

d *Hom Com.*

v 4. *Dr. S. Clarke*, x. 311.

"There are minerals called hydrophanous, which are not transparent till they are immersed in water, when they become so: as the hydrophane, a variety of opal. So it is with many a Christian. Till the floods of adversity have been poured over him, his character appears marred and clouded by selfishness and worldly influences. But trials clear away the obscurity, and give distinctness to his piety."—*Hitchcock.*

"Those whose tongues are gentlemen ushers to their wit, and still go before it."—*Ben Jonson.*

e *Campbell.*

**animals are contented when free from pain**

a Mk. ix. 50; Ma. v. 13.

b The Egyptians kept ducks and geese. Ostrich-eggs were probably found and eaten. But the word is sup by some to mean *purslain*, an insipid herb. The word is found only here.

c Ps. cii. 9.

"The Eastern people often make use of bread, with nothing more than

sustain life, without the slightest reference to enjoyment. Bread or rice of the worst kind, meat and vegetables without salt, are sorrowful meat in China, because they only suit a famished appetite, and never affect the taste with any gratification. And it appears from the context that Job entertained the same idea, for he says at *v.* 6, "Can that which is unsavoury be eaten without salt? or is there any taste in the white of an egg?" The soul or the appetite refuses such things; they are sorrowful meat to it. The remarks of Eliphaz the Temanite had no taste, no relish at all in the estimation of Job: they lacked the salt of aptitude and sense; they might be good in themselves, but they were out of place, and disgusted instead of soothing the mind of the patriarch. If we would make our counsel acceptable, we must change situations with the afflicted, and borrow, if possible, the very sentiments which are exercising their minds, that we may administer the same consolation to them which we should be glad to have administered to ourselves were we placed in the same circumstances.

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salt, or some such trifling addition, such as summer savory dried and powdered. This, Russel says, is done by many at Aleppo. The LXX. translation of this passage seems to refer to the same practice, when it renders the first part of the verse, "will bread be eaten without salt?"—*Burder.*

**8—10.** (8) **oh . . request,** *etc.*, death is his only hope. (9) **that . . God,** but only if it pleased God. (10) **then . . comfort,** this cannot refer to the grave, or annihilation. Here is a hint of belief of future blessedness. **not . . one,**[a] he rests his hope on his fidelity.

**he longs for death and the comfort he would then have**

[a] Ps. cxix. 13.

*Job's desire for death.*—It arose from—I. The comfort in the prospect of a speedy release from his extreme distress. II. The consciousness of having been God's faithful servant. This implies—1. Fearlessness in confessing the truth; 2. Faithfulness in communicating it. The testimony of Job's conscience, that he had neither by fearfulness nor faithlessness concealed the truth of God.

*Murmuring.*—Murmuring is a mercy-embittering sin, a mercy-souring sin. As, put the sweetest things into a sour vessel, it sours them; or put them into a bitter vessel, and it embitters them: murmuring puts gall and wormwood into every cup of mercy that God gives into our hands. As holy silence gives a sweet taste, a delightful relish, to all a man's mercies, so murmuring embitters all; the murmurer can taste no sweetness in his sweetest morsels; every mercy, every morsel, tastes like the white of an egg to him. . . . The murmurer writes *Marah*—that is, "bitterness"—upon all his mercies. . . . All the murmurer's grapes are grapes of gall, and all their clusters are bitter (De. xxxii. 32). As to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet, so to the murmuring soul every sweet thing is bitter.[b]

*vv.* 8—10. *J. Hales*, ii. 21.

"We lose the right of complaining sometimes by forbearing it, but we often treble the force."—*Sterne.*

"Those who complain most, are most to be complained of."—*M. Henry.*

"Distress is virtue's opportunity; we only live, to teach us how to die."—*Southerne.*

[b] *T. Brookes.*

**11—13.** (11) **strength,**[a] exhausted by suffering. **hope,** of prolonged life, and restored health. **end,** if I live, what will the rest of life be but a protracted misery? (12) **stones,** able to resist the storm. (13) **is . . me?** *etc.*, or, "is it not so that there is no hope left in me, and that succour is fled fr. me?"[b]

**he deplores his weakness**

[a] Ps. xc. 5. cnf. 15, 16.

[b] *Wordsworth.*

"Is a servant ordered to do a thing for which he has not strength; to undergo great hardships: he asks, 'Is my strength as iron?

*Moderation in sorrow.*—

My friend! enough to sorrow you have given,
The purposes of wisdom ask no more:
Be wise and cheerful; and no longer read
The form of things with an unworthy eye.
She sleeps in the calm grave, and peace is here.
I well remember that those very plumes,
Those weeds, and the high spear-grass on that wall,

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Am I a stone?" — *Roberts.*

"Nothing can occur beyond the strength of faith to sustain, or transcending the resources of religion to relieve."—*Binney.*

c *Wordsworth.*

By mist and silver rain-drops silvered o'er,
As once I pass'd, did to my heart convey
So still an image of tranquillity.
So calm and still, and look'd so beautiful,
Amid the uneasy thoughts that fill'd my mind,
That what we feel of sorrow and despair
From ruin and from change, and all the grief
The passing shows of Being leave behind,
Appear'd an idle dream, that would not live
Where meditation was. I turn'd away,
And walk'd along my road in happiness![c]

**he reproves his friends' lack of pity**

**14, 15.** (14) **to . . afflicted,** not stones or brass, but a sensitive man. **pity . . friend,** *see* Homily. (15) **brook,**[a] a desert wady, *see* Homily.

a He. ii. 1.

*Kindness to the afflicted.*—Job states a moral truth, *v.* 14. Pity is to be shown to the afflicted—I. In words of sympathy and kindness. II. In practical assistance as far as may be in our power. III. In refraining from what may unnecessarily wound the feelings. IV. In commending the sufferer's case to God. Ps. cxli. 5; Ja. v. 15, 16. This is to be done for any in affliction, especially for a friend, Lu. x. 29—37; Prov. xvii. 17.—*Mistaken friendship.*—I. There are times in a man's life when the need of friendship is deeply felt. 1. A man is made for friendship; 2. He requires friendship; 3. Affliction intensifies the need of friendship. II. At these times professed friends are often terribly disappointing. Instead of pity they give him—1. Unsympathetic talk; 2. Intrusive talk; 3. Irrelevant talk—4. Ungenerous talk.[b]

b *Dr. Thomas.*

"We say in common discourse, that a man may be his own enemy; and the frequency of the fact makes the expression intelligible. But that a man should be the bitterest enemy of his friends implies a contradiction of a peculiar nature. There is something in it which cannot be conceived without a confusion of ideas, nor expressed without a solecism in language; yet a man is often injured by the assistance of his friend, whose impulse, however generous and sincere, combines neither prudence for its regulation nor skill for its successful adoption." — *Junius.*

*Streams in Palestine.*—The phenomena of streams in this country aptly illustrate the character of Job's false friends. In winter, when there is no need of them, they are full and strong, and loud in their bustling professions and promises; but in the heat of summer, when they are wanted, they disappoint your hopes. You think your fields will be irrigated, and your flocks refreshed by them, when, lo! they deal deceitfully, and pass away. Nearly all the streams of this country, "what time they wax warm," thus vanish, go to nothing, and perish. Such were Job's friends. There is another illustration equally pertinent. You meet a clear, sparkling brook, and so long as you follow it among the cool mountains, it holds cheerful converse with you, by its merry gambols over the rocks; but as soon as you reach the plain, "where it is hot," it begins to dwindle, grow sad and discouraged, and finally fails altogether. Those which suggested the comparison of Job probably flowed down from the high land of Gilead and Bashan, and came to nothing in the neighbouring desert; for it is added, that the "troops of Tema looked, the companies of Sheba waited for them. They were confounded because they had hoped." It was on those high mountains only that Job could become familiar with the winter phenomena, when the streams are "blackish by reason of the ice;" for not only are Lebanon and Hermon covered with snow in the winter, and the brooks then frozen, but the same is true also of the higher parts of the Hermon, and of the mountains to the south of it, where Job is supposed to have resided.[c]

c *Dr. Thompson, Land and Book.*

**false friend-**

**16, 17.** (16) **blackish,** *etc.*, true of turpid streams in the

Hanran when the winter is severe. (17) **vanish,** exhaled by heat of the sun, or losing themselves in the sand.

*The babbling brook.*—Job compares his friends to a brook. Note three points in the comparison. I. The former professions of friendship. Like the noisy, rushing, wady-stream, full of water through the melted ice, and snow, and rain of winter, when less required. II. The failure in real kindness and sympathy when needed. Like the drying up of the brook through the summer heat, and the entire disappearance of the waters, having vanished into vapour, or been lost in the sands of the desert. III. The bitter disappointment. Like that of the caravans of Tema, when, contrary to their expectation, they find the stream dried up, and are unable to obtain a supply of water.[a]

*Oriental rivers.*—The whole description is directly coincident with a very valuable article inserted by Major Colebrook, in the seventh volume of *Asiatic Researches*, and entitled, "On the Course of the Ganges through Bengal." He observes, that the occasional obstructions which the rivers of Bengal meet with, on the return of their periodical flux, produce not unfrequently some very extraordinary alterations in the course and bending of their respective beds, and hence some equally extraordinary changes in the general face of the country. While some villages that, in common, are scarcely visited by a river, even at its utmost rise, are overflowed and suddenly swept away; others, actually seated on the banks of an arm, and that used to be regularly inundated, are totally deserted, and the inhabitants have to travel over many miles to obtain water. He adds, that the Ganges has evinced changes of this nature, in a greater degree than any other Indian stream; and that even since the survey of Major Rennel, in 1764, it has deviated in its course not less than two miles and a half; whence several of the villages which figure in his map are no longer to be found in the situations assigned them: while islands of considerable magnitude, now inhabited and cultivated, have started into being where the river then rolled its deepest waters.[b]

**18—20.** (18) **paths,** *etc., i.e.* travellers turn aside fr. their path in quest of water, and, finding none, perish. (19) **troops . . companies,** caravans, nomadic peoples. (20) **because . . hoped,** to find water. **ashamed,** bitterly disappointed.

*True friendship.*—Observe—I. The right of the afflicted to expect kindness and sympathy, especially from their friends. II. Care to be taken to make a visit of condolence to correspond with its profession. III. A great part of friendship, to be true in the time of trouble. IV. Our views of a friend's character not to be lightly changed, least of all by his circumstances.

*Brooks in the desert.*—In desert parts of Africa it has afforded much joy to fall in with a brook of water, especially when running in the direction of the journey, expecting it would prove a valuable companion. Perhaps before it accompanied us two miles, it became invisible by sinking into the sand; but two miles farther along, it would reappear and run as before, and raise hopes of its continuance; but after running a few hundred yards, would finally sink into the sand, not again to rise. In both cases it raised hopes which were not realised; of course it deceived. Perhaps it is to such brooks that Job refers in the 15th verse. There are many in Africa, which are described in verse

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**ship as a deceitful brook**

*a Hom. Com.*

*v.* 17. *Jos. Morton*, ii. 111.

"How were friendship possible? In mutual devoteduess to the good and true; otherwise impossible, except an armed neutrality or hollow commercial league. A man, be the heavens ever praised, is sufficient for himself; yet were ten men, united in love, capable of being and of doing what ten thousand singly would fail in. Infinite is the help man can yield to man."—*Carlyle.*

*b Dr. Good.*

**false friendship is disappointing**

"We have many acquaintances, but we can have but few friends; this made Aristotle say that he that hath many friends hath none."—*Johnson.*

"Sweet as refreshing dews or summer showers, to the long parching thirst of drooping flowers; grateful as fanning gales to fainting swains, and soft as trickling balm to bleeding pains—such are thy words."—*Gay*

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*a Campbell.*

he did not ask for their aid

*a* Ps. xlix. 15; Je. xv. 21.

"There is no man so friendless, but that he can find a friend sincere enough to tell him disagreeable truths."—*Bulwer Lytton*

"A principal fruit of friendship is the ease and discharge of the fulness of the heart, which passions of all kinds do cause and induce. We know diseases of stoppings and suffocations are the most dangerous in the body; and it is not much otherwise in the mind; you may take sarza to open the liver, steel to open the spleen, flour of sulphur for the lungs, castoreum for the brain; but no receipt openeth the heart but a true friend to whom you may impart griefs, joys, fears, hopes, suspicions, counsels, and whatsoever lieth upon the heart to oppress it, in a kind of civil shrift or confession."—*Bp. Reynolds.*

"Friendship closes its eyes, rather than see the moon eclipst; while malice denies that it is ever at the full."—*Hare.*

17, which run in the winter, or rainy season; but the return of the hot season completely dries them up, which prove often great disappointments to stranger travellers.[a]

21—23. (21) for . . nothing, ye are like a dried-up brook. ye . . down, I am as a thirsty traveller. (22) did . . me? ironical. I knew it would be vain to expect anything of you. (23)[a] The irony is continued. They were weak. What had happened to him, might happen also to them.

*Hollow friendship.*—Their feelings might be read in their faces. Only one had spoken with his lips, all with their looks. Their fear as if a pious dread at the signal display of Divine judgment. Afraid—I. Of being found sympathising with a guilty man. II. Of being involved in the same calamity. III. Of being called upon to relieve or defend the sufferer. Base to withhold sympathy and kindness from regard to our own comfort, credit, or convenience.

*Washington and his friends.*—An anecdote is told of the great Washington, which exhibits, in a fine light, the distinction between public duty and private friendship. During his administration as President of the United States, a gentleman, the friend and the companion of the general throughout the whole course of the revolutionary war, applied for a lucrative and very responsible office. The gentleman was at all times welcome to Washington's table; he had been, to a certain degree, necessary to the domestic repose of a man who had for seven years fought the battles of his country, and who had now undertaken the task of wielding her political energies. At all times and in all places Washington regarded his revolutionary associate with an eye of evident partiality and kindness. He was a jovial, pleasant, and unobtrusive companion. In applying for this office, it was accordingly in the full confidence of success; and his friends already cheered him on the prospect of his arrival at competency and ease. The opponent of this gentleman was known to be decidedly hostile to the politics of Washington; he had even made himself conspicuous among the ranks of opposition. He had, however, the temerity to stand as candidate for the office to which the friend and the favourite of Washington aspired. He had nothing to urge in favour of his pretensions but strong integrity, promptitude, and fidelity in business, and every quality which, if called into exercise, would render service to the State. Every one considered the application of this man hopeless; no glittering testimonial of merit had he to present to the eye of Washington; he was known to be his political enemy; he was opposed by a favourite of the general's; and yet, with such fearful odds, he dared to stand candidate. What was the result? The enemy of Washington was appointed to the office, and his table companion was left destitute and dejected. A mutual friend, who interested himself in the affair, ventured to remonstrate with the president on the injustice of his appointment. "My friend," said he, "I receive with a cordial welcome; he is welcome to my house, and welcome to my heart: but, with all his good qualities, he is not a man of business. His opponent is, with all his political hostility to me, a man of business; my private feelings have nothing to do in this case. I am not George Washington, but President of the United States; as George Washington I would do this man any kindness in

my power; but as President of the United States, I can do nothing."[b]

B.C. *cir.* 1520.

*b Cheever.*

**24, 25.** (24) **teach,**[a] if you are able to instruct. **I . . tongue,** I will learn in silence. **cause . . erred,** a hint that otherwise they should be silent. (25) **how . . words!**[b] *see* Homily.

*Job's remonstrance.*—Observe—I. He had asked no favour at their hands. II. They had not attempted to show him his sin. Note Job's sense of the value of such reproof.—*Right words.*—I. The form of such words. 1. Argument; 2. Reproof; 3. Instruction; 4. Admonition; 5. Persuasion. II. The character of the words. 1. Right and true in themselves; 2. The whole truth, so far as necessary, in connection with the subject; 3. Correct in their application; 4. Spoken in uprightness and sincerity. III. The efficacy of such words. 1. In enlightening the understanding; 2. In awakening the conscience; 3. In moving the affections and will; 4. In comforting the afflicted.

*Reprove* (*v.* 25).—Reprove means to prove the contrary of a statement, refute, disprove. So in Shakespeare:—

> "*Reprove* my allegation, if you can;
> Or else conclude my words effectual."

Donne has the following remarks:—"This word hath a double use and signification in the Scriptures. First, to reprehend, to rebuke, to correct, with authority, with severity; . . . and secondly, to convince, to prove, to make a thing evident, by undeniable inferences, and necessary consequences; so, in the instructions of God's ministers, the first is *to reprove*, and the *to rebuke* (2 Ti. iv. 2); so that reproving is an act of a milder sense than rebuking is."[c]

right words are forcible

*a* Pr. xxv. 12.

*b* Pr. xxv. 11; Ecc. xii. 11.

*v.* 25. *T. F. Dibdin*, 308.

"When the first time of love is over, there comes a something better still. Then comes that other love; that faithful friendship which never changes, and which will accompany you with its calm light through the whole of life. It is only needful to place yourself so that it may come, and then it comes of itself. And then everything turns and changes itself to the best."—*Bremer.*

*c Bibl. Word Book.*

**26, 27.** (26) **imagine,** propose. **speeches . . word,** the frenzied utterances of desperation not to be regarded as proofs of guilt. (27) **ye . . fatherless,** *lit.* even on the orphan would ye cast lots.[a] **dig,** traffic, you would make a gain over a friend.

*Job's estimate of his friends' reproof.*—I. Their argument and reproof had been pointless and profitless. II. Their reproof was directed only against words uttered in deep distress and great disquietude of spirit. Note the conduct of Job's friends: all the guiltier as being—1. Under colour of friendship; 2. Under profession of piety; 3. With considerable knowledge of Divine truth.

*Job's righteousness.*—The noted Daniel Burgess, the Nonconformist minister, was by no means of Puritan strictness, for he was the most facetious person of his day, and carried his wit so far as to retail it from the pulpit with more levity than decency. Speaking of "Job's robe of righteousness," he once said, "If any of you would have a suit for a twelvemonth, let him repair to Monmouth-street; if for his lifetime, let him apply to the Court of Chancery; but if for all eternity, let him put on the robe of righteousness." The sermons of Burgess were artfully adapted to the prejudices as well as the opinions of his hearers: wit and Whigism went hand in hand with Scripture. He was strongly attached to the House of Brunswick, and would not uphold the Pretender's cause from the pulpit. He once preached a sermon, about that time, on the reason why the Jews were called Jacobites, in which he said, "God ever hated

he charges them with cruelty

*a* "Ye are pitiless as creditors who take the children of a debtor after his death."—*Spk. Com.* See 2 Ki. iv. 1; Ez. xxii. 7.

"Of all sights which can soften and humanise the heart of man, there is none that ought so surely to reach it as that of innocent children enjoying the happiness which is their proper and natural portion."—*Southey.*

"So part we sadly in this troublous world, to meet with joy in sweet Jerusalem."—*Shakespeare.*

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Jacobites, and therefore Jacob's sons were not so called, but Israelites." The preacher's love of a joke here triumphed over the truth and his knowledge of chronology.[b]

*b Percy Anec.*

**he challenges investigation**

*a* Mal. iii. 18.

*b Homiletic Com.*

When heaven sends storms upon men, they must imitate the humble grass, which saves itself by lying meekly down.

Joy flies monopolists; it calls for two.

*c Roberts.*

**28–30.** (28) **now . . me,** Job could challenge examination. (29) **return,**[a] fr. censorious judgment to charity. (30) **taste,** moral perception.

*Job's challenge to his friends.*—I. Appeal of conscious integrity. II. Truth and sincerity read in his countenance. III. The ground of his appeal. Truth and innocence court investigation. No small excellence needful to a correct moral judgment. Grace is indicated not only by a tender, but an enlightened conscience.[b]

*A speaking face* (*v.* 28).—When a person is accused of uttering a falsehood, he says, "Look in my face, and you will soon see I am innocent." "My face will tell you the truth." When the countenance does not indicate guilt. it is said, "Ah! his face does not say so." "The man's face does not contain the witness of guilt."[c]

## *CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.*

**an appointed time for man**

*a* Ecc. iii. 1, 2; Jo. xi. 9, 10; Ps. xxxix. 4.

*b* De. xxiv. 14, 15; Ja. v 4.

*c* Ps. vi. 6.

*d G. Brooks.*

*v.* 1. *C. Simeon,* iv. 343.

*v.* 3. *J. Orton,* i. 363.

*vv.* 3, 4. *G. Morriott,* 107; *Dr. J. Dupre,* i. 22.

"Why may not I as passionately wish to see an end of life, as a slave in a hot day gasps for the refreshment of the shade? or as the labourer longs for the evening, when he may rest, and be paid for his pains?"—*Bp. Patrick.*

*e Roberts.*

"Like the servant, he panteth for the night shade, and like the hireling, he presseth on to his finishing."—*Dr. Good*

**1–3.** (1) **is . . time,**[a] a time of service; pressed service. (2) **shadow,**[b] by this the time for meals or rest is judged in the E. (3) **possess . . vanity,**[c] anxiously longing to lie down and rest.

*Life an appointed time.*—I. The facts implied in this question. 1. That man is mortal (Rom. v. 12); 2 That his present life is short (Psa. xc.; Isa. xl.); 3. That the period of his death, although fixed in the Divine plan, is unknown to himself—when, where, how; 4. That death will introduce him to an unending state of existence (Heb. ix. 27; Rev. xxii. 29). II. The impression which these facts should produce on us. 1. We should be mindful of death, as if a herald were daily reminding us that we must die; 2. We should sit lightly by the things of this present world (1 Cor. vii. 29—31; 1 John 15—17); 3. We should prepare for eternity by embracing the Saviour (Amos iv. 12; Mark xxxvi. 37); 4. We should be diligent in the prosecution of all Christian work (John ix. 4). Give a summary of the whole discourse, and found on it an earnest appeal.[d]

*Measuring time by the shadow.*—The people of the East measure time by the length of their shadow. Hence, if you ask a man what o'clock it is, he immediately goes in the sun, stands erect, then looks where his shadow terminates; he measures the length with his feet, and tells you nearly the time. Thus they earnestly desire the shadow, which indicates the time for leaving their work. A person wishing to leave his toil often cries out, "How long my shadow is in coming!" When asked, "Why did you not come sooner?" his answer is, "Because I waited for my shadow."[e]—In some parts of England it was customary, a few years ago, before watches became common, for all labourers, whom a long familiarity had taught the direction in which the fields lay in respect to the cardinal points of the heavens, when they wished to ascertain the hour of the day, to turn their faces towards the north, and observe the bearing of their own shadow. By this simple expedient they would often guess within a few minutes of the time.

**4—6.** (4) **when . . say,** *etc.*, instead of forgetting my cares in sleep.[a] (5) **flesh . . worms,** exact descr. of the disease. **broken . . loathsome,** "stiffens and bursts again." (6) **days . . shuttle,**[b] *see* Homily. **and . . hope,** they pass without any prospect of improvement.

*The loom and its lessons.*—I. As weavers' shuttles are charged with various substances, so men's experiences are loaded with different elements. II. As the weaver works according to a given pattern, so men should have a purpose in life. III. As the work of the weaver employs the whole man, so life demands all our energies. IV. As in the fabric woven, the durability of the whole piece depends on the quality of each thread, so the quality of the whole of life depends on the character of the words and deeds composing it. V. As the process of weaving is often interrupted by the breaking of the thread, so life has its hindrances. VI. As the piece woven is sometimes so wide that two are required to weave it, so life has its necessary partnerships. VII. The shuttle flies swiftly, so does life. VIII. The result in both cases will be one day examined.[c]

*Light in the darkness* (*v.* 4).—O Jesus, abide with those of us who are going down the hill of life; and then, when upon the grey horizon we see the dawn of the eternal morning, we shall know that old age is but the herald of the day which has no night. Night! the hour of mourning, of anguish, when all that made the outward brightness and the inward joy of life has vanished. O Jesus, abide with those of us whom trial has darkened; and the cloud shall be spanned by an arch of hope, the shadows lightened by holy love. O Jesus, abide with us, and then we shall believe in the morning. We shall await it with joyful assurance, and our present darkness shall be like the summer's nights beneath the pole, already radiant with the anticipated brightness of the morrow.[d]

**7, 8.** (7) **my . . wind,**[a] a puff, a breath, a sob. (8) **eye . . more,** he is convinced that he is a dying man. **and . . not,** I am even now as one dead.

*Homiletic hints on life.*—The frail and fleeting nature of life; its speedy termination; life terminated by a look from the Almighty; life, compared with God's eternity, only a moment; the impossibility of its recall; only one life on earth; solemn responsibility connected with our life.[b]

*Stages of life.*—

What is the existence of man's life,
But open war or slumber'd strife;
Where sickness to his sense presents
The combat of the elements;
And never feels a perfect peace,
Till Death's cold hand signs his release?

It is a flower—which buds, and grows,
And withers, as the leaves disclose;
Whose spring and fall faint seasons keep,
Like fits of waking before sleep;
Then shrinks into that fatal mould
Where its first being was enroll'd.

It is a dial—which points out
The sunset—as it moves about;

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**the night and the day alike wearisome**

*a* Extreme suffering at night is noted as specially characteristic of elephantiasis.

*b* Is. xxxviii. 12; Ps. cxliv. 4.

*vv.* 4, 5. *Dr. S. Lavington*, i. 343.

*v.* 6. *E. Blencowe*, l. 1.

*c J. C. Gray.* "The expression, when fairly rendered from the original, is peculiarly forcible: 'So much worse is my destiny than that of the bondsman and the hireling, that, while they pant and look early for the night shade, as the close of their trouble, even the night is not free from troubles to myself."—*Good.*

*d Dr. E. De Pressensé.*

**his life is without hope**

*a* Ps. lxxviii. 39; Ja. iv. 14; Ps. lxxxix. 47.

*b Hom. Com.*

"Those who find pleasure in dwelling upon and amplifying the faults of others, to the partial or total oblivion of their own, remind me of Hogarth's quaint picture in false perspective; wherein the trees that line the road, and the sheep travelling along it, grow larger and more distinct as they recede from the eye."—*F. W. Robertson.*

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And shadows out in lines of night
The subtle stages of Time's flight;
Till all obscuring earth hath laid
His body in perpetual shade.[c]

[c] *Dr. King.*

**death will end all**

**9, 10.** (9) **cloud . . away,** is dissipated one knows not how. **grave,** Heb. *Sheol,*[a] the underworld, Hades; it means "what is hollow and subterranean." (10) **shall . . house,** his dwelling. **neither . . more,** the Egyptians believed that some men would have power to return to their own houses.[b]

*The vanished cloud* (*v.* 9).—More than once we had noticed in our early mornings dull masses of cloud in the sky. As the sun got up and gathered strength, these all vanished. They did not drift away or pass to a different region of the heavens; but they vanished on the spot, such was the absorbing power of the desert sun. Clouds that would have brought a whole day's rain in our climate disappeared. We recognised the figure in Job.[c]—*Note on v.* 10.—Inanimate objects are often spoken of as if they knew their owners. A man who has sold his field, says, "That will not know me any more." Does a field not produce good crops, it is said, "That field doth not know its owner." Has a man been long absent from his home, he asks, when entering the door, "Ah! do you know me?" Does he, after this, walk through his garden and grounds, the servants say, "Ah! how pleased these are to see you!" Has a person been unfortunate at sea, it is said, "The sea does not know him."[d]

[a] Same word Ge. xxxvii. 35; Nu. xvi. 30, 33; De. xxxii 22; 2 Sa. xxii. 6.

[b] See *Spk. Com.*

"Clouds, those playful fancies of the mighty sky."—*Albert Smith*

[c] *Dr. Bonar.*

"Was I deceived, or did a sable cloud turn forth her silver lining on the night?"—*Milton.*

[d] *Roberts.*

**he complains of Divine restraints**

**11, 12.** (11) **therefore,**[a] for I shall soon be silent in the grave. (12) **sea,** or river, perhaps the Nile, which has to be kept within bounds. **whale,**[b] monster. *See* Homily.

*A cry to heaven.*—Job's expostulation is grounded on two facts. I. On the fact that God should afflict him at all. "Am I a sea," etc." 1. The recognition of the law of restraint in the universe; 2. A consciousness of the restraining force upon his own individuality; 3. A perplexity of judgment in consequence of this restraint. II. On the fact that his affliction should be so great. This leads us to reflect—1. On the mind's independency of the body; 2. On the mind's sources of misery; 3. On the mind's accessibility to God; 3. On the mind's supreme interest.[c]

*The monsters of the river* (*v.* 12)—Crocodiles are very terrible to the inhabitants of Egypt; when therefore they appear they watch them with great attention, and take proper precautions to secure them, so that they should not be able to avoid the deadly weapons afterwards used to kill them. To these watchings, and those deadly after-assaults, I apprehend Job refers, when he says, "Am I a whale (but a crocodile no doubt is what is meant there), that thou settest a watch over me?" "Different methods," says Maillet, "are used to take crocodiles, and some of them very singular; the most common is to dig deep ditches along the Nile which are covered with straw, into which the crocodile may probably tumble. Sometimes they take them with hooks, which are baited with a quarter of a pig, or with bacon, of which they are very fond. Some hide themselves in the places which they know to be frequented by this creature, and lay snares for him."[d]

[a] Ps. xxxix. 3; 1 Sa. i. 10; Lu. xxii. 44; Ma. xxvi. 37–39.

[b] La. iii. 7.

[c] *Dr. Thomas.*

"Some suppose this alludes to the sea overflowing its banks. But the Orientals also believe that the sea is the dwelling-place of many of their spiritual enemies. Hence they have a deity to watch the shore, whose name is Kali. Numerous enemies, also, are compared to the sea, and wicked chiefs who oppress the people, to a whale. 'Ah! that whale, who can escape him?'"—*Roberts.*

[d] *Burder.*

**he finds no rest at night**

**13–16.** (13) **when,** *etc.*, anticipating relief in sleep. (14) **then . . dreams,**[a] com. symptom in elephantiasis.[b] (15)

**strangling,** all. to sensation of suffocation or choking; another symptom. **rather . . life,** *lit.* bones. Death better than to be a living skeleton. (16) **I . . always,**[c] if this be to live. **let . . alone,** leave me, you can do me no good. **for . . vanity,**[d] full of emptiness.

*Why the believer does not wish to live always.*—I. He knows it is the will of God that he should not live always. II. Because here the work of grace is but imperfectly developed. III. Here the full blessedness of justifying righteousness cannot be enjoyed. IV. Here God is at best but imperfectly worshipped. V. The change is absolutely necessary for the completion of our blessedness, and the perfection of the Divine glory.

**17—19.** (17) **what,** *etc.*,[a] irony. Why should God concern Himself with so insignificant a creature? (18) **visit . . morning,** with successive trials. (19) **let . . spittle,** prov. expres. = a moment, or twinkling of an eye.

*Man magnified by his Maker.*—I. God has magnified man by bestowing upon him certain faculties—memory, imagination, understanding, reason, conscience. II. By the capacities with which He has invested him, he is capable of the pleasures which arise from converse with nature, from society, from doing good, from contemplation, from devotion. III. By the work of redemption He has undertaken in his behalf—the agent. His own Son: the means, vicarious suffering: the result, reconciliation. IV. By the privileges He has conferred upon him as a believer in Christ, on earth and in the sky. 1. The folly and guilt of man in setting his heart on any object less than God; 2. The superiority of the estimate of man in the Bible to that which is furnished by any other system; 3. The obligations of man to man; 4. Encouragement to trust in God.[b]

*Note on v.* 19.—This is a proverb among the Arabians to the present day, by which they understand, Give me leave to rest after my fatigue. This is the favour which Job complains is not granted to him. There are two instances which illustrate the passage (quoted by Schultens) in Harris's Narratives, entitled the Assembly. One is of a person, who, when eagerly pressed to give an account of his travels, answered with impatience, "Let me swallow down my spittle, for my journey hath fatigued me." The other instance is of a quick return made to one who used that proverb. "Suffer me," said the person importuned, "to swallow down my spittle:" to which his friend replied, "You may, if you please, swallow down even Tigris and Euphrates;" that is, take what time you please.[c]

**20, 21.** (20) **I . . sinned,** *i.e.* say, I have: suppose I have. Hypothetical. **what . . thee,** what atonement or compensation can I make? **thou . . men,** who knowest all. **set . . thee,**[a] as a butt or target for the arrows. **so . . myself,** life is insupportable. (21) **why . . iniquity?**[b] he confessed he had sinned, and desired a sense and assurance of pardon. **for now,** *etc.*,[c] he fears that he may die unforgiven.

*Why is sin not pardoned?*—Consider this inquiry—I. In the matter to which it refers. II. In the circumstances under which it may be proposed. 1. When the heart is alarmed under the judgments or threatenings of God, while there is no right knowledge of God's character: 2. When the soul is enveloped in spiritual gloom, arising out of a consciousness of personal guilt,

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*a* Ge. xl. 5, 6, xli. 7, 8.
*b* Avicenna
*c* Ge. xxvii. 46.
*d* Ps. cxliv. 4, lxxviii. 33.
*v.* 14. *P. Goodwin, Mystery of Dreams*, 200.
*v.* 15. *Bp. Abernethy, Trent.* 367.
*v.* 16. *D. Wilcox*, i. 194; *H. Grove*, i. 269; *Dr. A. Gerard*, ii. 99; *Dr. S. Charters*, ii. 444; *Sydney Smith*, 70; *Dr. T. Dwight*, ii. 275; *Bp. Dehon*, ii. 346.

**why should God consider man?**

*a* Ps. cxliv. 3, viii. 4; He. ii. 6.

*v.* 17. *W. Jones*, i. 316; *T. Blackley*, iii. 65.

*vv.* 17, 18. *T. Pierce*, 307.

*b G. Brooks.*

"The record of life runs thus—man creeps into childhood, bounds into youth, softens into age, totters into second childhood, and slumbers into the cradle prepared for him, there to be watched and cared for."—*Henry Giles.*

*c Burder.*

**why is not sin pardoned?**

*a* La. iii. 12.

*b* Is. lxiv. 9; 2 Sa. xxiv. 10; Mi. vii. 18, 19; Ho. xiv. 2; Jo. i. 29; Ps. ii. 14; 1 Jo. iii. 5.

*c* Is. xxvi. 19; Da. xii. 2.

*v.* 20. *Dr. A. Smyth*, ii. 1; *T. Pyle*, ii. 433

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rr. 20, 21. *J. Alting, Op.* ii. 161.

r. 21. *Jos. Fawcett*, i. 209.

while the Gospel is not rightly understood; 3. When there is earnestness in the spirit in seeking the Saviour though ignorance of the Saviour's character and work is mingled with it. III. In the answer which may be returned to it. 1. Because there is no real humiliation before God; 2. Because there is no personal faith in Christ; 3. Because there is no actual determination not to turn with the whole heart to God.

## *CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.*

**Bildad's reply**

**is not God just?**

*a* Ge. xviii. 25; De. xxxii. 4; Ro. ii. 6; Ps. lxxxix. 14; Re. xvi. 7.

*b Dr. Thomas.*

"A Christian must labour to have his speech as contracted as can be in the things of this earth; and even in Divine things, or words should be few and wary. In speaking of the greatest things, it is a great point of wisdom not to speak much."—*Leighton.*

"Friendship is like rivers, and the strands of seas, and the air; common to all the world."—*Bp. Taylor.*

*c R. Tuck, B.A.*

**1—3.** (1) **Bildad,** *see* ii. 11. (2) **words . . wind,** omit "be like:" *i.e.* thy words are rash, unreasoning. (3) **doth,** *etc.*,[a] can you suppose that in thus dealing with thee, God is acting unjustly?

*Bildad's address.*—It contains—I. A reproof that is severe. II. A doctrine that is unquestionable. III. An implication that is unkind. IV. A policy that is Divine. V. An authority not to be trusted. VI. A consideration that is solemn. VII. An ancient poem that is illustrated. VIII. A conclusion that is encouraging.[b]

*The Book of Job a dramatic poem.*—Dramatic poetry is that in which the persons introduced speak or act in their own names. It is said that this kind of composition is not found in the Scriptures. On the other hand, it is shown that in the Book of Job we have the essential feature of dramatic poetry. Job, and his wife, and his three friends, are, as it were, introduced to us, and go through their several parts in person before us. Certainly the style both of this book and of the Song of Solomon differs entirely from ordinary narrative. Associating, as we too easily do, the word dramatic with the representations of life produced on the stage, and forgetting the larger and literary meaning of the term, we have been needlessly offended at any portion of our Bible being called dramatic. The following extract is from a valuable article in Smith's Dict.: "Inasmuch as the Book of Job represents an action and a progress, it is a drama as truly and really as any poem can be which develops the working of passion and the alternations of faith, hope, distrust, etc. . . . . It is a drama, as life is a drama, the most powerful of all tragedies; but that it is a dramatic poem, intended to be represented on the stage, or capable of being so represented, may be confidently denied."[c]

**God accepts those who turn to Him**

*a* 1 Jo. iii. 22.

*b* Pr. iv. 18; Ma. xiii. 31—33.

*c J. Vaughan.*

*rr.* 5—7. *H. Smith*, 133.

"Job, after his trials, knew more of himself and God, was more like Him, and possessed more wealth than

**4—7.** (4) **if . . him,** the insinuation is that Job's children were punished for some sin. (5) **if,** *etc.*, implying that Job was not a man of prayer; or (6)[a] that being sinful his prayer was not answered. (7) **though . . small,**[b] by comparison with what the end may be.

*Small beginnings, great endings.*—There are four little beginnings that have great endings. I. To feel our sins. II. To have a struggle in our hearts, and by God's help to get a victory over some besetting sin. III. To feel a pleasure in good things. IV. To try to do good to somebody. Observe—there are three things to encourage you. 1. God's promise; 2. The Holy Spirit's work; 3. Christ is your beginning and your ending.[c]—*Small beginnings.*—I. In nature the beginning of many things is very small, whose ending is very great. From a little fountain flows the increasing

river. From a small seed grows the majestic tree. II. In history the beginning of many events has been very small whose progress and influence have been very great. III. In human life the beginning of the growth of great biographies has often been very small. The early experiments by Watt on the power of steam were made with a tea-kettle. West used to say that a kiss from his mother made a painter of him. The fall of an apple and the swinging of a lamp led to great results in the lives of Newton and Galileo. IV. In religious experience small beginnings have often led to great increase of grace and goodness. A tract given, a word spoken, a letter written, has often resulted in conversion, and conversion has led to eminent usefulness and holiness. Learn:—1. Do not despise the day of small things; 2. Cherish good thoughts and feelings; 3. Try to do good even in little things; 4. The influence of a child is small, but may lead to much good; 5. If you begin to serve God now, and persevere, you will increase in His favour to the end of life, and the small beginning of grace will increase to the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.[d]

*Small beginnings.*—The day of a sinner's conversion to God is at first a day of small things, but at length it becomes a day of great things; and whatever his beginning might be, his end shall be peace. The cloud like a man's hand overspreads the face of the heavens, and sends down a copious, refreshing, and fructifying shower. The incorruptible seed of Divine grace, falling into the good ground of an honest heart, flourisheth into a wide-spreading tree. The babe becomes a strong man, and the young convert upon earth a glorified saint in heaven. Not only the feeble shall not become more feeble, but he that is feeble shall be as David, and the house of David shall be as the angel of the Lord.[e]

**8—10.** (8) **inquire . . age,** *etc.*,[a] every age appeals to ages previous. Present knowledge the accumulations of past investigation and experience. (9) **for,** *etc.*,[b] the tendency of many to underrate the present and refer to the "good old times." But there is a prob. all. to the longevity of patriarchal times. (10) **words . . heart,**[c] fr. their deep convictions, knowledge, experience.

*Life a shadow.*—Life as a shadow calls for—I. Diligence in the improvement of it. II. A loose hold of things of time. III. A proper estimate to be made of the troubles and joys, the possessions and pursuits, of the present life. IV. Earnestness in securing a solid and lasting happiness beyond the grave.

*What is life?*—

And what is life? An hour-glass on the run,
A mist retreating from the morning sun,
A busy, bustling, still repeated dream.
Its length? A minute's pause, a moment's thought.
And happiness? A bubble on the stream,
That in the act of seizing shrinks to nought.[d]

**11—14.** (11) **can,** *etc.*, prov. express. **rush,** papyrus. **flag,** reed-grass of Nile. (12) **whilst,** *etc.*,[a] plants of the rush kind depend upon constant supplies of moisture. (13) **paths,**[b] ways and relations of life. **hypocrite's,** profane person, godless man. (14) **trust . . web,** the web or house of the spider, a frail thing, soon swept away.

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he did before. In the jeweller places an article of worth in the fire and under the hammer, it comes forth in his hands an article o greater beauty and value. The good wheat which is cast into the mill, comes out, after the grinding, as flour, more valuable and serviceable than it was before. It is thus with God's people. After they are tried they come forth as gold purified."—*J. Bate.*

*d Hive Mag.*

"Friends are much better tried in bad fortune than in good."—*Aristotle.*

*e Beddome.*

**he appeals to antiquity**

*a* Ps. xliv. 1; Ro. xv. 4.
*b* 1 Ch. xxix. 15; Ps. xxxix. 5; Go. xlvii. 9.
*c* Ps. cxlv. 4; Isa. xxxviii. 19; De. vi. 7, xi. 19.
*vv.* 8—10. *J. Collingwood. The Church,* 89; *Bp. Wordsworth, Occ. Ser.* i. 167.
*v* 9. *S. Bourn,* ii. 255; *Dr. R. Price,* 164.
"Life, however short, is made shorter by waste of time."—*Johnson.*
*d J. Clare.*

**life must have its supports**

*a* Isa. xix. 5—7.
*b* De. viii. 19; Ps. cxii. 10; Pr. x. 28; Ps. ix. 17

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Ma. xxv. 51; Isa. xxxiii 14.

c *Dr. Thomas.*

vv 8—11. *C. Simeon*, iv. 347.

vv 11—14. *C. O. Pratt*, 263

v. 13. *Dr. R. South*, x 35; *N. Beadon*, i. 199; *Dr E. Li Hutton*, ii. 1; *W Simons*, 72.

"The application of this beautiful similitude is easy, and its moral exquisitely correct and pertinent. As the most succulent plants are dependent upon foreign support for a continuance of that succulence, and in the midst of their vigour are sooner parched up than plants of less humidity; so the most prosperous sinner does not derive his prosperity from himself, and is often destroyed in the highday of his enjoyments, more signally and abruptly than those who are less favoured, and appear to stand less securely."—*Good.*

d *Dr. Paxton.*

**the hope of the hypocrite**

*a* Ps. lii. 5—7.

*b* Ps. xxxvii. 35.

*c Homiletic Commentary.*

"Hope! fortune's cheating lottery, where for one prize an hundred blanks there be!"—*Cowley.*

"I will despair, and be at enmity with cozening hope; he is a flatterer."—*Shakespeare.*

*d R. B. Nicholls.*

*False life.*—Of the false life of man three things are suggested. I. That its existence is frail. 1. It lacks solidity; 2. It lacks constancy. II. That its course is sinful. 1. It is always ruled more by a desire to gratify self than to please God; 2. It will always be more anxious for the approbation of men than the favour of God. III. Its destiny is appalling. 1. False life looses its hopes; 2. False life looses its supports; 3. Yet they are often held with the greatest tenacity till death.[c]

*The rush and the flag* (*v.* 11).—The reed grows in immense numbers on the banks and in the streams of the Nile. Extensive woods of the canes *Phragmit* and *Calama magrostes*, which rise to the height of twelve yards, cover the marshes in the neighbourhood of Suez. The stems are conveyed all over Egypt and Arabia, and are employed by the Orientals in constructing the flat terraces of their habitations. Calmet thinks it probable that this extensive region of canes gave name to the Red Sea, which, in those times, entirely inundated the marshes on its borders. Jam Suph is a sea that produces canes; and as the Arabs denote two sorts of canes by the general name *baz*, the surname being added afterward, Moses, the sacred historian, following the same ancient denominations, did not attend to the specifical niceties of botanology. This same leader of the people underwent the first dangers of his life in a cradle made of the *donax* or *hagni*. This information induced Calmet to conclude that in these reeds which covered the banks of the Nile we have what our translation renders the flags (suph), in which Moses was concealed in his trunk, or ark of bulrushes, *goma*. The remarkable height to which they grow, and their vast abundance, lead to the persuasion that in some thick tuft of them the future prophet of Israel was concealed. It appears also, from the interrogation of Job, that the *goma* cannot reach its full stature without an abundant supply of water; "Can the rush—*goma*, rather the tall strong cane or reed—grow up without water?" This plant, therefore, being a tall reed, is with great propriety associated with the *kanah*, or cane: "In the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass, with canes and reeds."[d]

**15, 16.** (15) **he,** the hypocrite. **lean,**[a] rely upon as a source of comfort. **house,** worldly wealth, station. (16) **green . . sun,**[b] full of promise in the early dawn, flourishing.

*Forgetfulness of God.*—To forget God is—1. Not to think of Him; 2. Not to thank Him; 3. Not to serve and obey Him. It is to forget—1. His presence; 2. His providence; 3. His precepts. Forgetfulness of another implies—1. Want of love; 2. Want of respect. Observe—I. Forgetfulness of God is the root and essence of all sin. II. To forget God is to forget Him who possesses all claims to our remembrance. III. In forgetting God we give our thoughts and hearts to the world, which has no attractions but what it derives from Him, and which can neither satisfy nor save us. IV. To remember God is to elevate, ennoble, and purify ourselves.[c]

*The spider's web.*—Note the Bible description of the hypocrite's hope; it is as the spider's web. It may stretch its graceful coils over a thousand green leaves and bursting germs of promise. Diamond-like dewdrops may rest upon it. Yet it is worth nothing. The brush of a bird's wing, the breath of a passing breeze, may extinguish its existence. "The hope of the hypocrite shall perish."[d]

**17—19.** (17) **roots . . heap,**[a] he seems therefore to be firmly rooted. (18) **if . . him,**[b] if God wither him up. **it . . deny,** *etc.*, as if ashamed of him. (19) **this . . way,** this is the grand result of all this seeming prosperity. **out . . grow,**[c] either a better race; or, to be in their turn denied.

*Premonitions of death desired.*—Lord, be pleased to shake my clay cottage before Thou throwest it down. May it totter awhile before it doth tumble. Let me be summoned before I am surprised. Deliver me from sudden death. Not from sudden death in respect of itself, for I care not how short my passage be, so it be safe. Never any weary traveller complained that he came too soon to his journey's end. But let it not be sudden in respect of me. Make me always ready to receive death. Thus no guest comes unawares to him who keeps a constant table.[d] Job. xiv. 2.

*Prospect of death.*—

Yes, 'tis the hand
Of death I feel press heavy on my vitals,
Slow sapping the warm current of existence.
My moments now are few—the sand of life
Ebbs fastly to its finish. Yet a little,
And the last fleeting particle will fall
Silent, unseen, unnoticed, unlamented.
Come, then, sad Thought, and let us meditate,
While meditate we may. We have now
But a small portion of what men call time
To hold communion; for even now the knife,
The separating knife, I feel divide
The tender bond that binds my soul to earth.
Yes, I must die—I feel that I must die;
And though to me has life been dark and dreary,
Though Hope for me has smiled but to deceive,
And Disappointment still pursues her blandishments,
Yet do I feel my soul recoil within me
As I contemplate the dim gulf of death,
The shuddering void, the awful blank—futurity.
Ay, I had planned full many a sanguine scheme
Of earthly happiness—romantic schemes,
And fraught with loveliness; and it is hard
To feel the hand of death arrest one's steps,
Throw a chill blight o'er all one's budding hopes,
And hurl one's soul untimely to the shades,
Lost in the gaping gulf of blank oblivion.
Fifty years hence, and who will hear of Henry?
Oh! none; another busy brood of beings
Will shoot up in the interim, and none
Will hold him in remembrance. I shall sink
As sinks a stranger in the crowded streets
Of busy London: some short bustles caused,
A few inquiries, and the crowds close in,
And all's forgotten.[e]

**20—22.** (20) **perfect,**[a] single-hearted, simple, upright. **help . . doers,** grasp the hand of, etc.; to hold them up. (21) **till . . mouth,** *etc.*,[b] *i.e.* if thou be perfect. (22) **they . . shame,**[c] *i.e.* when, bec. of uprightness, thy mouth is filled, etc.

*Human destiny determined by moral character* (*v.* 20).—This is Bildad's conclusion, as contained in the three verses before us.

B.C. *cir.* 1520.

**the fate of the wicked**

*a* Jer. xii. 1, 2.

*b* Ps. xcii. 7, xxxvii. 10, 36, lxxiii. 19.

*c* Ps. lxxv. 7, cxiii. 7.

*d T. Fuller.*

"Death, thou art he that will not flatter princes, that stoops not to authority, nor gives a specious name to tyranny; but shows our actions in their own deformed likeness."—*Shakespeare.*

"God hath a thousand handes to chastise; a thousand dartes of punicion; a thousand bowes made in divers wise; a thousand arblasts bent in His dongeon."—*Lydgate.*

John Howard, the philanthropist, honoured by a monument in St. Paul's Cathedral, but more highly honoured in the hearts of relieved prisoners, when parting with a friend previous to an intended visit to Egypt, where it seemed probable that he would die of the plague, said to him, "We shall soon meet in heaven. The way to heaven is as near from Grand Cairo as from London."

*e H. K. White.*

**the perfect man not cast off**

*a* Ps. xciv. 14.

*b* Ps. cxxvi. 2—6.

*c* Ps. cxxx. ii. 18.

B.C. *cir.* 1520.

*d Homilist.*

"O you unwise and unlearned! teach us first what God is, that you may be believed in accusing me of impiety; tell us where God is. Is He shut up within the walls of temples? is this your piety, to place God in the dark, or to make Him a stony god? O you unskilful! know ye not that God is not made with hands, and hath no basis or fulcrum to stand upon, nor can be enclosed within the walls of any temple; the whole world, variegated with plants, animals, and stars, being His temple." — *Heraclitus.*

*e Archer Butler.*

"Before thou reprehend another, take heed that thou art not culpable in what thou goest about to reprehend. He that cleanses a blot with blurred fingers will make a greater blot. Even the candle-snuffers of the sanctuary were of pure gold." — *Quarles.*

*f Dr. J. Todd.*

In the passage we have two points. I. The real condition of the good. 1. It is a condition in which they will never be deserted of God; 2. It is a condition in which God will inspire them with happiness. II. The other point is the real condition of the wicked. It is here given—1. Negatively: neither will He help the evil doers; 2. Positively: they that hate Thee shall be clothed with shame, etc.[d]

*Distance from God.*—We cannot tell how far is the nearest fixed star, and we know that the mass of mankind would conjecture it a few miles at most: could we approach nearer, we would, for the first time, learn how far we were. Surely it is so with our religious estimates of approximation to the light and glory of God. The earth-born crowd afar, if they think at all of the matter, never dream themselves so darkly, so remotely exiled: it is only he who struggles nearer and much nearer, that begins at length to perceive the true amount of the distance.[e]—*The riches of God.*—God is so rich that He can put more of what is beautiful upon a single lily or tulip than the great king Solomon could put on all his clothing. The hoarse, homely peacock carries more that is beautiful upon his tail than the richest king could ever show. And even the poor butterfly, which is to live but a few hours, has a more glorious dress than the proudest, richest man that ever lived. God can dress this poor worm up so, because He is rich. If, then, He can take such care of the lilies, the birds, and insects, and make them more beautiful than man can ever be, will He not take care of us, if we obey Him? Suppose you had a rich father, so rich that he had a hogshead full of gold, and a great barn full of silver: do you think that if you were to be a good child he would ever refuse to take care of you? But God has more gold and silver laid up in the ground, which men have not yet dug up, than would make a mountain; it may be, thousands of mountains. Can He not take care of you? Suppose your father had more oxen and horses and cattle than you could count over in a day, or in a week, would he not be able to take care of his child, and give him everything he needs? Yes. But God has "cattle upon ten thousand hills;" and "every beast of the forest" is His, and His are "all the fowls of the air." Can He not give you food from all these cattle, and clothe you, and give you beds from the feathers of all these fowls? Yes: He is able to do it all. Suppose your father was so rich that he had ten thousand men to work for him every day, all at work, and all paid to their mind, and all happy in working for him: would you have any fears that he could not take care of you and do you good? But God has more servants than these: He has all the good people on earth in His employment, and all the angels in heaven. He pays them all. And if you need anything, He can send one, or a million, of these His servants to you to help you.[f]

## *CHAPTER THE NINTH.*

**Job's reply**

**man cannot argue with God**

1—4. (1) **answered,** it is much for the patience of Job that he did answer. (2) **I . . truth,** I know it is true that God does not pervert judgment. **how . . God?** [a] even the very best man. (3) **if . . him,** in pleading his cause, and vindicating himself. **he . . thousand,** of the questions God might put to him. (4) **he is,**[b] these words to be omitted. **who . . prospered?**[c] a question not yet answered.

*a* Ps. cxliii. 2, cxxx. 3; 1 Jo. i. 8; Ps. xl. 12.
*b* Da. ii. 20; Jude 25.
*c* He. iii 7, 12, 13.

*Job's idea of what God is in Himself.*—I. He regarded Him as just. II. He regarded Him as wise. III. He regarded Him as strong. IV. He regarded Him as retributive. "Who hath hardened himself against Him, and hath prospered?"[d]—*Hardened against God* (*v.* 4).—1. The passage intimates that appeals are addressed by God to men in order to bring them into allegiance to him. God has appealed to you by the instrumentality of—1. Conscience; 2. Of providence; 3. Of revealed truth. II. We are to observe, that men treat the appeal made by God with obdurate resistance. 1. The habit here indicated, we state to be heinous in its nature; 2. It is also progressive in its influence. III. Obdurate resistance to the appeals made by God exposes to fearful and fatal consequences.[e]

*Resistance to the Divine will.*—Julian, usually styled the *Apostate*, one of the Roman emperors, with the view of invalidating the truth of our Saviour's prophecies respecting the desolation of the Jews, made an attempt to rebuild the temple of Jerusalem; but from the breaking out of terrible balls of fire near the foundations, the workmen were obliged to abandon their impious attempt. "Who hath hardened himself against God, and hath prospered?" His counsel shall stand, and He will do all His pleasure.

*Immortality of God.*—

Our God is still as kind, and all His gifts
Like wondrous, like unlimited, like fair,
As when the wind first blew. Man is to God
That he hath ever been. Still shines the sun
As keen and pure on the grey rotting rock,
As on the universal matter once,
Ere now marmoreal floods had spread their couch
Of perdurable snow, or granite wrought
Its skyward impulse from earth's heart of fire
Up to insanest heights; or thunder oped
His cloudy lips and spake. And still to them
Who live alone with nature and with God,
Smile with the sun and sadden with the moon,
The elements their brethren, e'en as men,
Come gifts unasked, unmeasured, like the light
Which lights at countless points the formless whole.[f]

**5—7.** (5) **which . . mountains,**[a] by volcanic agency, *etc.* An illus. of Divine power. **anger,**[b] as it may seem to the unthinking. (6) **which . . place,** all. to earthquakes, etc. (7) **which . . not,**[c] darkness, as of night, sometimes overspreads the face of the world: it is as if the sun had not risen. **sealeth . . stars,**[d] with dense clouds.

*God's agency in material nature* (*v.* 5).—I. Its almightiness is overwhelmingly grand in its manifestations. It should therefore—1. Impress all with a sense of their utter insignificance; 2. It should impress the sinner with his impious hardihood; 3. It should impress the good with their privileges. II. Its almightiness is co-extensive with the universe. 1. God's universal agency explains all material phenomena; 2. It binds men practically to recognise Him in every part of nature.[e]

*Earthquakes* (*vv.* 5, 6).—This is evidently a description of an earthquake. During the terrible earthquake at Jamaica, 1692, the mountains were split, they opened, they closed again, they leaped, they fell in heaps. As a further illustration

B.C. *cir.* 1520.

*v.* 4. *C. P. Eden*, 87.

*d Homilist.*

*e J. Parsons.*

"Infinity of Being is a pre eminent mode of the essence of God, by which it is devoid of all limitation and boundary (Ps. cxlv. 3; Isa. xliii. 10), whether from something above it or below it, from something before it or after it. It is not bounded by anything above it because it has received its being from no one. Nor by anything below it, because the form, which is itself, is not limited to the capacity of any matter whatsoever that may be its recipient. Neither by anything before it, because it is from nothing efficient; nor after it, because it does not exist for the sake of another end."—*Arminius.*

*f Bailey.*

**the great power of God**

*a* Hag. ii. 6; Heb. xii. 26; Mat. xxi. 21; 1 Cor. xiii. 2.

*b* "Once look on natural phenomena, of which the causes are hidden, as indications of special emotions in the Godhead, and the way is open for erroneous conceptions of His dealings with His creatures."—*Spk. Com.*

*c* "There may be a ref. to the darkness in Egypt,

B.C. *cir.* 1520.

Ex. x. 21." — *Wordsworth.*

*d* Lu. xxi. 25; Jos. x. 12—14.

*vv.* 5, 6. *Dr. S. Chandler*, 1749.

*v.* 6. *J. S. Vernède*, ii. 153.

*e Dr. Thomas.*

**the power of God in creation. Acturus, Orion, Pleiades**

*a* Ge. i. 7, 8.

*b* Ps. lxxvii. 19; Ge. i. 2; Ma. xiv. 25.

*c* Heb. *Ash*, prob. deriv. fr. Chaldæans fr. Arabic word = to carry: hence called the Carriage by Arabs, and by us Charles's Wain.

*d* A late legend connects it with Nimrod, Heb. *Cesil*, = fool.

*e* "The Persian poets comp. the Pleiades to a bouquet of jewels." — *Delitzsch.*

*f* Am. v. 8.

*g* v. 9.

*h Dr. Thomas.* "Look up and behold the eternal fields of light that lie round about the throne of God. Had no star ever appeared in the heavens, to man there would have been no heavens; and he would have laid himself down to his last sleep in a spirit of anguish, as upon a gloomy earth vaulted over by a material arch — solid and impervious." — *Carlyle.*

*i Proctor.*

**the mysterious ways of God**

*a* Ps. lxxvii. 19; 1 Ti. vi. 16.

of the fearful and wide-spreading effects of an earthquake, we may cite an occurrence which recently took place at Quito, a city under the equator, standing at an elevation of 9,000 feet. On the morning of the 23rd March, 1859, a severe earthquake almost entirely destroyed the city of Quito. The churches, convents, and government buildings, were most of them thrown down, besides many private residences. The houses not thrown down were so injured as not to be habitable. The damage was estimated at 3,000,000 dollars, and 5,000 persons are supposed to have been destroyed. In the same city 40,000 souls were hurled into eternity by a dreadful earthquake in 1797.

**8—10.** (8) **alone,**[a] by His almightiness: having no need of help. **waves,**[b] heights, mountain billows. (9) **Arcturus,**[c] Ursa Major. **Orion,**[d] the Hunter. **Pleiades,** Heb. *Cimah*, = cluster.[e] The seven stars.[f] **and . . south,** the vast star-spangled spaces of the southern heavens. (10) **which . . out,**[g] great in power, magnitude, mystery, multitude.

*Job's idea of what God is to mankind* (*v.* 10).—He regarded the Eternal as—I. Inscrutable. 1. In His works; 2. In His essence. He regarded the Eternal as—II. Irresponsible. III. As resistless. 1. God is an offendable Being; 2. The proud have aiders and abettors. He regarded the Eternal—IV. As inexorable (*vv.* 14—19). Job represents God—1. As uninfluenced by man; 2. Unapproached by human argument; 3. As too holy to encourage any one to have confidence in his own virtues; 4. As regardless of modern distinctions of society.[h]

*A child's first impression of a star.*—

She had been told that God made all the stars
That twinkled up in heaven; and now she stood
Watching the coming of the twilight on,
As if it were a new and perfect world,
And this were its first eve. How beautiful
Must be the work of nature to a child
In its first impression! Laura stood
By the low window, with the silken lash
Of her soft eye upraised, and her sweet mouth
Half parted, with the new and strange delight
Of beauty, that she could not comprehend,
And had not seen before. The purple fold
Of the low sunset clouds, and the blue sky
That looked so still and delicate above,
Fill'd her young heart with gladness; and the eve
Stole on with its deep shadows. Laura still
Stood, looking at the west with that half smile,
As if a pleasant thought were at her heart.
Presently, in the edge of the last tint
Of sunset, where the blue was melted in
To the faint golden mellowness—a star
Peep'd suddenly. A laugh of wild delight
Burst from her lips, and, putting up her hands,
Her simple thoughts broke forth expressively—
"Father, dear father! God has made a star."[i]

**11, 12.** (11) **lo,** *etc.*,[a] God was about him at all times. **Per.** this was in all, to the vision of Eliphaz.[b] (12) **behold,** *etc.*,[c] **all.** to his own losses. None has power to hinder, or the right to question the way of God.

*The hand of God in afflictions* (*v.* 12).—It appears from this passage that we are to recognise—I. The truth of God's agency. "He taketh away." II. The uncontrollableness of His dominion. "Who can hinder Him?" III. The unimpeachableness of His conduct. "Who will say," etc. To restrain such a disposition there is necessary—1 A conviction of His supremacy; 2. Of His rectitude; 3. Of His wisdom. Must we be kept in absolute ignorance and silence while God is dealing with us thus? 1. You would not be often capable of understanding the subject, even were God to tell you what He doeth; 2. There may be useful reasons for withholding from you the degree of knowledge which you are competent to receive; 3. An appointed hour is approaching when the restraints you are now under will be taken off, and your inquiries will be fully allowed and indulged; 4. Some inquiry is permitted you even now.[d]

*Resignation.*—

Heart, be still!
In the darkness of thy woe,
Bow thou silently and low;
Comes to thee whate'er God will,—
Be thou still!

Be thou still!
Vainly all thy words are spoken,
Till the word of God hath broken
Life's dark mysteries—good or ill—
Be thou still!

Rest thou still!
'Tis thy Father's work of grace,—
Wait thou yet before His face;
He thy sure deliverance will—
Keep thou still!

Lord, my God!
By thy grace, O may I be
All submissive, silently,
To the chastenings of Thy rod:
Lord, my God!

Shepherd King!
From Thy fulness grant to me
Still, yet fearless, faith in Thee,
Till from night the day shall spring!—
Shepherd king![e]

**13—15.** (13) **proud helpers,**[a] helpers of pride; or, strength; *lit.* the helpers of Rahab are prostrate under Him. (14) **how . . him,** if such is the fate of the strongest. (15) **whom,** *etc.*,[b] even innocence could not withstand such power.

*Resignation of all to God.*—

Since 'tis Thy sentence I should part
With the most precious treasure of my heart,
I freely that and more resign;
My heart itself, as its delights, is Thine.
My little all I give to Thee:
Thou gav'st a greater gift, Thy Son, to me.
Take all, great God! I will not grieve;
But still will wish that I had still to give.

B.C. *cir.* 1520.

*b* iv. 15.

*c* Da. iv. 35; Je. xviii 6; Ro. ix. 29; Is. xlv. 9.

*d W. Jay.*

"A discreet physician minds not so much what we desire as what is convenient, and a lancet performs what juleps will not; so God Almighty takes away spiritual superfluities rather than grants what we inordinately desire; and a few afflictions help to moderate our corrupt affections, and appease our inordinate appetites." — *Hon. R. Boyle.*

"The Lord is never so displeased with His children as to hate them; neither are His sharpest corrections sent in His wrath, though He may seem at these times to be angry. Outward prosperity is no infallible sign of God's love, neither are afflictions, crosses, and calamities infallible signs of God's displeasure."—*S. Smith.*

*e Schiller.*

**even the righteous cannot answer God**

*a* Is. xxx. 7, xxxi. 1—3.

*b* 1 Pet. ii. 23,

"Believe and fear not! in the blackest cloud a sunbeam hides; and from the deepest pang some hidden

B.C. *cir.* 1520.

mercy may a God declare!"—*Robert Montgomery.*

I hear Thy voice; Thou bid'st me quit
My paradise; I bless and do submit:
I will not murmur at Thy word,
Nor beg Thy angel to sheath up his sword.[c]

*Christian resignation under reproach.*—

Be vengeance wholly left to powers Divine!
Then welcome infamy and public shame,
And last, a long farewell to worldly fame;
'Tis said with ease, but, oh. how hardly tried
By haughty souls to human honour tied!
Oh, sharp convulsive pangs of agonising pride!
Down, then, thou rebel, never more to rise!
And what thou didst, and dost, so dearly prize;
That fame, that darling fame, make that thy sacrifice—
'Tis nothing thou hast given; then add thy tears
For a long race of unrepenting years;
'Tis nothing yet, yet all thou hadst to give;
Then add those maybe years thou hast to live;
Yet nothing still; then poor and naked come;
Thy Father will receive his unthrift home,
And thy blest Saviour's blood discharge the mighty sum.[d]

**16—18.** (16) **if . . called,** in an agony of despair: or prob. with cry of innocence (*v.* 15). **would . . voice,** for such an answer would be a piece of inconceivable condescension. (17) **for,** *etc.*, his troubles, he being innocent, sug. that God would not hear his prayer. (18) **suffer . . breath,**[a] one trouble followed another bef. there had been time for recovery.

*The benefit of affliction.*—In a journal of a tour through Scotland by the Rev. C. Simeon, of Cambridge, we have the following passage:—"Went to see Lady Ross's grounds. Here also I saw blind men weaving. May I never forget the following fact: One of the blind men on being interrogated with respect to his knowledge of spiritual things, answered, 'I never saw till I was blind; nor did I ever know contentment when I had my eyesight, as I do now that I have lost it. I can truly affirm, though few know how to credit me, that I would on no account change my present situation and circumstances with any that I ever enjoyed before I was blind.' He had enjoyed eyesight till twenty-five, and had been blind now about three years. My soul," Mr. Simeon adds, "was much affected and comforted with his declaration. Surely there is a reality in religion!"—*Patience in affliction.*—On her arrival Mrs. Tatham was greatly distressed to see her beloved child reduced by acute suffering to a state of total prostration. During this season of anguish, however, the sufferer manifested the most Christian patience. The Rev. G. I. Johnson, an aged minister of Christ, inquired of her what he should particularly pray for, and received answer, "That I may have entire resignation." "How good it is to have Jesus near us in the hour of trial." "Yes," said Miss Tatham, "but I cannot either pray or trust Him as I ought; I feel I deserve to perish. Jesus! Saviour! help me to come to Thee! Save me! Thou art all in all—all in all. My Saviour! be Thou near me through life's night. Give, O give me Thy holy spirit! Jesus! Jesus! may I not be impatient or ungrateful."[b]

**19—21.** (19) **if . . strength,**[a] if I regard these dealings as illus. of strength. **lo . . strong,** none can withstand Him.

c *Keble.*

Reconciliation with God is not our drawing nigh to Him in prayer, but our being made nigh to Him by the blood of Christ.

"What is resignation? It is putting God between oneself and one's grief."—*Mad. Swetchine.*

d *Dryden.*

**he is unworthy of Divine regard**

a He. xii. 11.

*v.* 18. "Of a cruel master it is said, 'When his servants stop to take their breath, he abuses them.' 'The man grudges me my breath' 'What! can I work without taking my breath?' 'The toil is always upon me; I have not time for breathing.'"—*Roberts.*

"Patience in cowards is tame, hopeless fear; but in brave minds, a scorn of what they bear."—*Dryden*

"The ground of all great thoughts is sadness."—*Bailey.*

b *Life of Miss Tatham.*

**it would be be folly to**

judgment, if an illus. of justice. **who . . plead?** might not He say, "who shall call Me into court?" (20) **my . . me,**[b] the flaws in my argument would be soon detected. **it . . perverse,** the assertion of perfection, a proof of the contrary. (21) **though,** *etc.*,[c] *lit.* "I perfect!—I know not myself—I abhor my life."

*Affliction as a furnace.*—I. A furnace is prepared for gold: "The refining pot for silver, and the furnace for gold;" so afflictions are appointed for the saints, who are compared to gold. II. A furnace refines gold, and makes it much purer than before; so afflictions refine and make more holy: "When He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." III. A furnace is made sometimes very hot, according to the kind and condition of the metal; so are afflictions sometimes very grievous, heavy, and trying, as the case requires. IV. A furnace melts the gold, and makes it soft before it is refined; so afflictions those whom they mean to purify. V. A furnace will destroy tin, lead, etc., and also the drossy part of gold; so afflictions burn up the loose and hypocritical, and purge from His people all their corruptions. VI. The metal, when it comes forth from the furnace, is more prepared for its proper use; so are the people of God when they come forth from afflictions.[d]

*Afflictions winning the heart for God.*—"I have been all my life like a child whose father wishes to fix his undivided attention. At first the child runs about the room, but his father ties up his feet; he then plays with his hands until they likewise are tied. Thus he continues to do till he is completely tied up. Then, when he can do nothing else, he will attend to his father. Just so has God been dealing with me to induce me to place my happiness in Him alone. But I blindly continued to look for it here, and God has kept cutting off one source of enjoyment after another, till I find that I can do without them all, and yet enjoy more happiness than ever in my life before."[e]

**22–24.** (22) **this . . thing,** *etc.*,[a] it happens to all men alike, good and evil. His friends had asserted that the evil were punished, and the good rewarded in this life. (23) **if . . suddenly,** that there be no time or way of escape. **he . . innocent,**[b] "Job utters nothing more bitter than this in the whole book."[c] (24) **the . . wicked,**[d] so it may seem at this day. **covereth . . thereof,** that in hearing causes they cannot discern betw. the evil and the good.

*Job's view of his sufferings* (*vv.* 24–35).—He seems to regard them in two aspects. I. As too great to render any efforts of self-consolation effective. This suggests—1. A valuable power of mind; 2. A natural tendency of mind; 3. A sad defect of mind. II. As too deserved to justify any hope of relief. 1. He feels that no self-cleansing would serve him before God; 2. That there is no one to act as umpire between him and his Maker; 3. That his afflictions were directly from God, and until they were removed there was no hope for him.[e]

*The happy surprise of death.*—The Rev. Mr. Hall, of Arnsby, Mr. Evans, of Foxton, and Mr. Christian, of Sheepshead, three eminently pious ministers of the Gospel, attended a ministers' meeting at Mr. Woodman's, Sutton, in the Elms, Leicestershire. The day was solemn, and the discourses delivered were very interesting and appropriate. In the evening, these ministers spent their time together in the most agreeable conversation. Amongst

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assert perfection

*a* 1 Co. x. 22.

*b* Lu. xviii. 14; 1 Jo. i. 8, 10.

*c* Pro. xxviii. 26; Je. xvii. 9, 10; Ps. cxxxix. 23, 24.

*d B. Keach.*

This may be illustrated by the following incident in the life of Nelson. In time of war, a French officer was once brought into his presence. He went boldly up to the great admiral, and held out his hand. Nelson drew back. "Give me your sword," said he, "and then I will take your hand."

*e Dr. Payson.*

man not dealt with here according to character

*a* Ecc. ix. 2, 3. "There is no difference whether a man be innocent or not."—*Delitzsch.*—"A terrible statement, but one wh. cannot be gainsaid, without ref. to a future compensation."—*Spk. Com.*

*b* "A Titanic outburst of unutterable woe."—*Spk. Com.*

*c Jerome.*

*d* Da. iv. 17.

*e Dr. Thomas.* "There is before the eyes of men, on the brink of dissolution, a glassy film, which death ap-

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pears to impart, that they may have a brief prospect of eternity, when some behold the angels of light, while others have the demons of darkness before them."—*Cockton.*

other subjects, one of them proposed for discussion that passage in Job ix. 23, "If the scourge slay suddenly, he will laugh at the trial of the innocent." Deep seriousness pervaded the conversation, while each minister gave his thoughts on the text. When it came to Mr. Christian's turn to speak, he dwelt upon the subject with an unusual degree of feeling. He considered it as referring to the sudden death of the righteous; and was expatiating very largely on the desirableness of such an event, and the happy surprise with which it would be attended; when, amidst a flood of rapturous tears, he took his flight from the world while the words were yet faltering on his tongue!

**the fleetness of life**

**25, 26.** (25) **post,** *lit.* a runner; all. to swift couriers that bear despatches.[a] **they . . away,** intent only on reaching the end of the stage. **they . . good,** as the courier is indif. to surrounding things. (26) **swift ships,**[b] which fly bef. the wind, and leave no track on the sea or river. **eagle . . prey,** swooping down, and leaving no mark in the air.

*a* 2 Ch. xxx. 6.

*b Lit.*, ships of reed, or papyrus; see Is. xviii. 2. "What enables the shepherd to perform the long and tiresome journeys across Africa, is the camel, emphatically called by the Arabs the ship of the desert; he seems to have been created for this very trade."—*Bruce's Travels.*

*The brevity of human life* (*vv.* 25—33).—These words give us a view of man in the—I. Brevity of his mortal existence. The figures which are here employed are most expressive. 1. "My days are swifter than a post;" 2. "They are passed away as the swift ships;" 3. "As the eagle that hasteth to the prey." II. As the subject of sore affliction and distress, we remark—1. That the distresses of some are very severe and numerous; 2. That great afflictions should not be regarded as evidence of any special guilt. III. As guilty and polluted, but ignorant of the appointed method of deliverance. Notice—1. The expedient proposed; 2. The inefficacy of this expedient; 3. The reasons of this inefficacy. (1) The disparity in the condition of God and man; (2) The want of a suitable person to interpose between them.—*The fleetness of life.*—Let us look at it—I. As a prophetic fact. We quit this life—1. With unwrought powers; 2. With unfulfilled plans. II. As a terrific fact. To whom is it terrible? To all whose hearts are centred in this world. Such should remember two things. 1. That their wealth relatively becomes less valuable to them every day; 2. That eternity relatively becomes more awful to them every day. III. As a cheering fact. To whom is it cheering? To those who though in the world are not of the world.[c]

*c Dr. Thomas.* "Ah! my days are like an arrow.' 'What is my time? 'tis like the wind.' 'Tis like cotton spread in the strong wind.' 'See that falling leaf; that is life.' 'Tis but as a snap of the finger.' 'Am I not like a flower?' 'Yes; it is a stream.' 'A neer-mulle, *i.e.* a bubble! how softly it glides along! how beautiful its colours! but how soon it disappears!"—*Roberts.* "My faithful Saviour! It should not distress me though all the birds of the air were daily and hourly to sing and discourse to me of my mortality. The nectar I sip from

*Swift ships* (*v.* 26).—Many interpretations have been given of this expression. The author of the Fragments annexed to Calmet's *Dictionary* observes that if it can be rendered supposable that any animal, or class of animals, may be metaphorically called ships, it is the dromedary, well known to Job. The Eastern writers apply the term to camels and dromedaries. "The whole caravan being now assembled, consists of a thousand horses, mules, and asses, and of five hundred camels; these are the ships of Arabia; their seas are the deserts."—Sandy's *Travels.* Of the dromedary, which is a kind of camel, Mr. Morgan (*History of Algiers*) says, "I saw one perfectly white all over, belonging to Lella Oumane, princess of that noble Arab Neja, named Heyl ben Ali, upon which she put a very great value, never sending it abroad but upon some extraordinary occasion, when the greatest expedition was required—having others, inferior in swiftness, for more ordinary messages. They say that one of these Aarishes will, in one night, and through a level country, traverse as much ground as any single horse can perform in ten, which is no

exaggeration of the matter, since many have affirmed to me that it makes nothing of holding its rapid pace, which is a most violent hard trot, for four-and-twenty hours on a stretch, without showing the least sign of weariness or inclination to bait; and that then, having swallowed a ball or two of a sort of paste made up of barley-meal, and, may be, a little powder of dry dates among it, with a bowl of water, or camel's milk, if to be had, and which the courier seldom forgets to be provided with in skins, as well for the sustenance of himself as of his Pegasus, the indefatigable animal will seem as fresh as at first setting out, and ready to continue running at the same scarcely credible rate, for as many hours longer, and so on from one extremity of the African desert to the other, provided its rider could hold out without sleep and other refreshments."—*The ancient post.*—Though it is, alas! too plain that the adage, "Time is money," obtains little credence in the East, yet there is one striking exception to the ordinary rule—it is in the case of the post; thus letters are carried inland from Bombay along miserable roads, with scarce any bridges, by relays of horsemen, at the rate of at least 125 miles a day. Nor can our Government claim the credit of having been the first to insist on the speedy transmission of the mail. The necessity for this was fully understood by its predecessors in Eastern rule, the Mogul emperors. Even yet, when important battles or other political events take place in the remoter parts of India, they are said frequently to become known in Calcutta within so short a period that it has occasionally been suspected the natives may have managed to outrun the Government despatches by a private post of their own. It is unnecessary to point out the force which this imparts to the patriarch's words.

**27—31.** (27) **heaviness,**[a] *lit.* faces, *i.e.* downcast looks. (28) **afraid . . sorrow,** rather, afraid by reason of my sorrows. (29) **why . . vain?** if counted guilty, why trouble myself to prove my innocence? (30) **hands . . clean,**[b] *lit.* clean with lye; *i.e.* potash. (31) **yet . . ditch,** even if he were cleansed by his own conscience, God by His dealings would make him to be abhorred.

*Affliction revealing Christians.*—When the green leaves bedeck the trees and all is fair, one cannot readily find the birds' nests, but when the winter lays bare the trees, any one, with half an eye, may see them. Thus, amid the press of business and prosperity the Christian may scarcely be discerned, his hidden life is concealed amid the thick and throng of the things of earth; but let affliction come, a general sickness, or severe losses in the family, and you shall see the Christian man plainly enough in the gracious patience by which he rises superior to trial. The sick bed reveals the man; the burning house, the sinking ship, the panic on the exchange, all these make manifest the hidden ones. In many a true believer, true piety is like a drum, which nobody hears of unless it be beaten."[c]—*Affliction an incentive to zeal.*—There is an old story in the Greek annals of a soldier under Antigonus who had a disease about him, an extremely painful one, likely to bring him soon to the grave. Always first in the charge was this soldier, rushing into the hottest part of the fray, as the bravest of the brave. His pain prompted him to fight, that he might forget it; and he feared not death, because he knew that in any case he had not long to live. Antigonus, who greatly admired the valour of his soldier, discovering his malady,

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Thy dripping wounds swallows up the few bitter drops which death pours out to me from his cup, at my departure from this world. What, Lord Jesus, should I long for more than to depart and be with Thee?"—*Gotthold.*

"Let dissolution come when it will, it can do the Christian no harm, for it will be but a passage out of a prison into a palace; out of a sea of troubles into a haven of rest; out of a crowd of enemies to an innumerable company of true loving, and faithful friends; out of shame, reproach, and contempt, into exceeding great and eternal glory."—*Bunyan.*

**Job cannot purify himself**

*a* Je. viii. 18; Ps. cxix. 120, cxxx. 3.

*b.* Je. ii. 22; Is. lxiv 6.

*v.* 30. W. *Howell, Sers.* 1835.

*vv.* 30, 33. *Dr. T. Chalmers,* viii. 86.

*c Spurgeon.*

"Our afflictions are like weights, and have a tendency to bow us to the dust, but there is a way of arranging weights by means of wheels and pulleys, so that they will even lift us up. Grace, by its matchless art, has often turned the heaviest of our trials into occasions for

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heavenly joy. 'We glory in tribulations also.' We gather honey out of the rock and oil out of the flinty rock."—*Spurgeon.*

c *Spurgeon.*

**the need of a daysman**

*a* Je. xlix. 19; Ecc. vi. 10.

*b* 1 Sa. ii. 25; Ps. cvi. 23; 1 Jo. ii. 1, 2.

c Ps. xc. 11, xxxix. 10

*v.* 34. *The Mediator, Vill. Preach.* i. 139; *Dr. T. Chalmers*, vii 128.

"For every sort of suffering there is sleep provided by a gracious Providence, save that of sin."—*J. Wilson*

"He who has most of heart, knows most of sorrow."—*Bailey.*

had him cured by one of the most eminent physicians of the day; but, alas! from that moment the warrior was absent from the front of the battle. He now sought his ease; for, as he remarked to his companions, he had something worth living for—health, home, family, and other comforts, and he would not risk his life now as aforetime. So, when our troubles are many we are often by grace made courageous in serving our God; we feel that we have nothing to live for in this world, and we are driven, by hope of the world to come, to exhibit zeal, self-denial, and industry. But how often is it otherwise in better times, for then the joys and pleasures of this world make it hard for us to remember the world to come, and we sink into inglorious ease.[c]

**32–35.** (32) **for . . him,**[a] we are altogether unequal. (33) **daysman,**[b] umpire, arbitrator. **that . . both,** being accepted by both, partaking of nature of each. (34) **let him,** *i.e.* the mediator. **his rod,** *i.e.* the rod of God, of punishment. (35) **then,** *etc.*, if he were so disarmed by the daysman. **but . . me,**[c] I have not this mediator, I cannot plead for myself.

*Daysman* (*v.* 33). Marg., "umpire;" none between Job and the Almighty. In the combat between Prince Arthur and the two Paynim brothers who had despoiled Sir Guyon, Cymochles insultingly asks the prince:—

"What art thou
That mak'st thyself his dayesman to prolong
The vengeance prest?"—Spenser, *Fairy Queen*, ii. 8.

It is properly in the Heb. a di-judicator or arbiter between two parties, and is exactly the word used by the indignant Jacob to Laban in Gen. xxxi. 37—"Set *it* here before my brethren and thy brethren, that they may *judge* between us both." The sense of "day" here is well illustrated in Thomas Wright's *Provincial Dictionary*:—

"The most part of my debtors have honestly payed,
And they that were not ready I have gently *dayed*."
Wager's *Cruell Debtor*, 1566.

## *CHAPTER THE TENTH.*

**Job complains of his sufferings**

*a* "I will give myself up to complaint."—*Noyes.*

*b* Ps vi. 1, 2; Ro. vii. 1.

c *Simeon, M.A.*

"Count each affliction whether light or grave, God's messenger sent down to thee. Do thou with courtesy receive him. Grief should be like joy—majestic, equable, se-

**1–3** (1) **leave . . myself,** *lit.* let loose my complaint over myself.[a] (2) **do . . me,**[b] *i.e.* do not treat me as one proved to be wicked. **shew . . me,** let me know wherein I have done wrong. (3) **good,** pleasant, gratifying—is there not a reason? **despise . . hands,** slight Thy servant, whose goodness is fr. Thee. **shine . . wicked,** cause the plans of the ungodly to prosper.

*Impatience reproved* (*v.* 1).—We shall—I. Show that this is a common experience; daily observation proves that it is common—1. Among the ungodly; 2. Among the godly. The commonness of this experience may well lead us to—II. Inquire into the reasons of it. 1. Impatience; 2. Unbelief; 3. Forgetfulness of our real desert; 4. A disregard of the great ends of life. Towards the lessening this common evil we shall—III. Prescribe some remedies for it. It may be mitigated, and often prevented, by—1. A due attention to our worldly callings; 2. A close walk with God; 3. A frequent survey of heaven.[c]—*The afflicted patriarch.*—Here we have—I. His mournful complaint. II. His anxious plea. These words imply—1. A consciousness of guilt; 2. That the condem-

nation which God had threatened in His Word is richly deserved. We may note also the encouragements we have to present this prayer. They proceed from a variety of sources. (1) The work of Christ; (2) The character of God; (3) The promises of the Gospel; (4) The experience of sinners. III. His rash expostulation.—*Job's bitter exclamation* (*v.* 1).—I. Let us see the grounds of this bitter utterance. Observe—1. His original condition; 2. The reverses he had experienced. II. What has often originated such an exclamation. We see it exhibited in the proud Ahithophel (2 Sam. xvii. 23), the desponding Elijah (1 Kings xix. 1—4), in the perfidious Judas (Matt. xxvii.), and it is often manifested in the self-destroyed of our times. III. The evil such an exclamation exhibits. It is sin—1. Against the Author of life; 2. Against the Divine goodness with the life given; 3. Against the great ends of life; 4. Against our own happiness. IV. The Divine remedy for this evil. 1. To look within and see the vileness, corruption, etc.; 2. Look up and see the mercy, love and pity of God waiting for your salvation; 3. Look forward and see what is to be done by you; 4. Look around and see the suffering, sad, and the desolate; 5. Look beneath and see the world of the lost. Learn:—(1) Seek daily grace; (2) Suppress wicked discontent; (3) Look and live for eternal life.[d]—*Chastisement and condemnation.*—Here we see severe chastisements. I. Divine providence afflicting—1. By personal afflictions; 2. By trying bereavements; 3. Satan's temptations; 4. The world persecuting; 5. God Himself appearing to forsake us. II. Earnest expostulations: "Show me," etc. 1. Is it that there is some secret sin indulged? 2. Is it that Thou art about to try my faith? 3. Is it that by these trials Thou art about to promote my sanctification? 4. Is it that Thou, my God, are to be hereby glorified? III. Fervent prayer. 1. I acknowledge that I deserve this chastisement; 2. Afflict me as Thou wilt, but save my soul; 3. I plead Thy mercy in Christ for my salvation.

*A lesson taught by an afflicted believer.*—"My letter was interrupted," writes the Rev. R. Watson, "by being called to visit an old follower of Jesus Christ. I have been much profited by the interview. I have not been to instruct, but to be instructed. One of his expressions was, 'Days, weeks, and months have rolled round during my affliction, and I have scarcely known the night from the day, nor the day from the night, so rapidly and joyfully have the hours escaped me: I have felt nothing but joy and love; not for a moment have I been impatient or weary, or wished it otherwise with me; so marvellously has God wrought in me. This is the hand of God. This never grew in nature's soil.'"—*Affliction making us long for heaven*.—We had traversed the Great Aletsch Glacier, and were very hungry when we reached the mountain tarn half-way between the Bel Alp and the hotel at the foot of the Æggischorn; there a peasant undertook to descend the mountain, and bring us bread and milk. It was a very Marah to us when he brought us back milk too sour for us to drink, and bread black as a coal, too hard to bite, and sour as the curds. What then? Why, we longed the more eagerly to reach the hotel towards which we were travelling. We mounted our horses, and made no more halts till we reached the hospitable table where our hunger was abundantly satisfied. Thus our disappointments on the road to heaven whet our appetites for the

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date, confirming, cleansing, raising, making free; strong to consume small troubles; to commend great thoughts—grave thoughts—thoughts lasting to the end."—*Aubrey de Vere.*

*v.* 1. *Dr. H. Blair*, iv. 1.

*v.* 2. *T. Manton*, v. 1077; *H. E. Manning*, iii. 293.

*d Dr. J. Burns.*

*Examples of the benefit of affliction.*—Joseph's brethren, Ge. xlii. 21; Joseph, Ge. xlv. 5, 7, 8; Israel, De. viii. 3, 5; Josiah, 2 Ki. xxii. 19; Hezekiah, 2 Chr. xxxii. 25, 26; Manasseh, 2 Chr. xxxiii. 12; Jonah, ii. 7; Job, David, Prodigal Son, Lu. xv. 21.

"Come, then, affliction, if my Father bids, and be my frowning friend: a friend that frowns is better than a smiling enemy. We welcome clouds which bring the farmer rain, though they the present prospect blacken round, and shade the beauties of the opening year, that, by their rich stores enrich'd, the earth may yield a fruitful summer and a plenteous crop.'—*C. Swaine.*

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better country, and quicken the pace of our pilgrimage to the celestial city.[e]

4—6. (4) hast . . flesh?[a] *etc.*, seeing only the outside of things. (5) are . . man? *etc.*,[b] is Thy life, like man's, short, clouded? (6) that . . iniquity, *etc.*,[c] as men who see so little and discover so painfully; and under the influence of passion and prejudice.

*Afflictions.*—"In all cases of suffering the people of God should consider—I. God wills them and sends them: now the will of God is perfectly righteous, and what He does is so well done that it could not be better done. II. There is need of them, or we should not have them. III. Their number, measure, and continuance God determines; and, comparatively speaking, they are but for a moment. IV. The Lord will be sure to support us under them. V. They are not too many, too heavy, or too long, as Satan would have them; nor too few, too short, or too light, as our corrupt nature would have them. VI. Their end is a weight of glory, and the crown that attends them is everlasting."

*Affliction increased with our strength.*—"I had," said Latimer, describing the way in which his father trained him as a yeoman's son, "my bows bought me according to my age and strength; as I increased in them so my bows were made bigger and bigger." Thus boys grew into cross-bowmen, and by a similar increase in the force of their trials, Christians become veterans in the Lord's host. The affliction which is suitable for a babe in grace would little serve the young man, and even the well-developed man needs severer trials as his strength increases. God, like a wise father, trains us wisely, and as we are able to bear it He makes our service and our suffering more arduous. As boys rejoice to be treated like men, so will we rejoice in our greater tribulations, for here is man's work for us, and by God's help we will not flinch from doing it.[d]—*Benefit of afflictions.*—What can differ more than the aspect of the on-coming and the whole phenomenon of a summer's rain, and its actual after results? The sun goes out. Birds cease their singing. Low and terrific sounds and voices, vengeful thunders, are in the air. Great winds come as *avant-couriers*, sweeping onward, and causing the trees to groan and writhe as if in pain. Weakly leaves are shredded off and hurled hither and thither. All beasts hide themselves. Everything looks dark as the judgment-day. Then comes, with mighty roar, the outpouring and beating rain, that still further shreds off the leaves, and tears the trees, and beats down the grass, and overwhelms the grain, and dishevels the flowers. In the midst of this storm let a man look out, and he will sceptically say, "Is this the refreshment of nature? Is this the cup that is put to the lips of flowers that they may drink and be revived?" And yet, let the hour go by; let all its gloomy works and seemings be swept away with it; let the sun reappear; let the birds begin to sing again; let the trees shake themselves of drops of rain; let the grass lift itself up once more, and then man will instinctively praise God for that which before seemed to be only a process of destruction. The storm seems to have gone, but it has not gone. Those things which at first appeared—all the external signs of fury—these have passed away; and now the storm is at work on the root, and every blade of grass is drawing, and every tree is pumping, and every flower is drinking. Who could have cleansed the air as that breathing wind has? Who could

*e Spurgeon.*

**the greatness of God makes man unworthy of notice**

*a* 1 Sa. xvi. 7; Lu. xvi. 15.

*b* 2 Pe. iii. 8.

*c* Ps. xliv. 21; Zep. i. 12.

"Afflictions are God's potions, which we may sweeten by faith and fervent prayer; but we, for the most part, make them bitter, putting into God's cup the evil ingredients of our impatience and unbelief."—*J. Dod* (words which at the age of 96 he used to say to his sick friends).

*d Spurgeon.*

"Our crosses are not made of iron, though painted sometimes with iron colours; they are formed of nothing heavier than wood. Yet they are not made of pasteboard, and will never be light in themselves, though our Lord can lighten them by His presence. The Papists foolishly worship pieces of wood supposed to be parts of the true cross, but he who has borne the really true cross, and known its sanctifying power, will value every sliver of it, counting his trials to be his treasures, his afflictions argosies of wealth, and his losses his best gains."—*Spurgeon.*

have swept the vapours out of the heavens as that tornado has? Who, by any appliance of human skill, could have watered the acres as that rain has? Who could have given new life to the wasting herbage as that thunderstorm has, which went tramping through the valley and the wilderness, apparently a messenger of evil? One hour after it is gone all things silently thank God, that one hour before shuddered and trembled, and said, "Hast Thou forgotten to be gracious?" So it is with the ministrations of suffering and sorrow. While the storm pelts, men shrink. While the thunder sounds, they slink down. While the tempest rages, it is as if they were ruined. But when the violence abates a little, they begin to lift up their head, and to perceive that it was not all dark, that it was not all thunder, that it was not all beating, that there was an element of good in it; and gradually they learn the sweet bounty and benefit that God meant to bestow upon them by afflictions.[d]

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"Sorrow is a kind of rust of the soul, which every new idea contributes in its passage to scour away. It is the putrefaction of stagnant life, and is remedied by exercise and motion." — *Johnson*

*d H. W. Beecher.*

**7–10.** (7) **thou . . wicked,**[a] it is within Thy knowledge, bec. Thou seest not as man seest. **none . . hand,**[b] hence, bec. Thou knowest all, I look to Thee for release. (8) **thine hands,**[c] *etc.*, see marg. Since Thou hast taken such pains to make me what I am, wilt Thou forsake the work of Thine own hands? (9) **remember . . clay,**[d] all. to origin of man. Shall so wonderful a work, out of such poor material, be all undone? (10) **hast . . milk,** *etc.*,[e] ref. to human embryo.

**Job is as God made him**

*a* Ps. i. 6, vii. 8 xvii. 3, xxvi. 1-5 De. xxxii. 39; Ps. l. 22.

*b* Jo. x. 27, 30.

*c* Is. lxiv. 4.

*d* Per. a ref. to clay of the potter. Is. xxix. 16, xlv. 9; Ro. ix. 21—23.

*e* Ps. cxxxix. 14—16.

*Conscious integrity* (*v.* 7).—We propose to show—I. What we are to understand by this appeal. Job never intended to assert that he was possessed of sinless perfection. But he appealed to God—1. That he was free from the sin imputed to him: 2. That he was on the whole upright before God. But that we may not be too hasty in making such an appeal, let us consider—II. What is necessary to warrant it. 1. That we are free from all allowed sin; 2. That we endeavour habitually to approve ourselves to God. But in proportion to the difficulty of making this appeal is—III. The blessedness of being able to make it—1. Under any trouble that may come upon us; 2. In the prospect of death and judgment. Address—(1) Those who are living in any known sin; (2) Those who think themselves in a good state.[f]

*f C. Simeon, M.A.*

*Note on v.* 10.—Much philological learning has been brought to the explanation of this passage. In the preceding verse Job is speaking of his death. "Wilt Thou bring me into dust again?" But what has the pouring out of milk to do with death? The people of the East pour milk upon their heads after performing the funeral obsequies. Has a father a profligate son, one he never expects to reclaim, he says, in reference to him, "Ah! I have poured milk upon my head," *i.e.* "I have done with him: he is as one dead to me." "And curdled me like cheese." The cheese of the East is little better than curds: and these also are used at the funeral ceremonies.[f]

*v.* 7. *O. Heywood*, iii. 495.

*Cruddled* (*v.* 10). For this very frequent transposition, compare "brust" and "burst," "girn" and "grin," "burnt" and "brent," "girdle" and "griddle."

*f Roberts.*

**11–13.** (11) **thou . . flesh**, ref. to fœtal existence. **fenced,** *lit.* hast woven me.[a] (12) **favour,**[b] providential care, including parental solicitude, etc. **spirit,** life. (13) **these . . things,** former mercies, and subsequent trials. **hast . . heart,** all that has happened has been the outworking of Thy hidden purpose. **know . . thee,** as Thy purpose.

**his physical frame and life are from God**

*a* Hence the application of the word *texture* and the term muscular *tissue.*

*b* Ac. xvii. 28.

*Wonders of the body.*—Our bodies are at all times like the fire which was shown to the hero of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, in Inter-

B.C. *cir.* 1520.

*rr.* 11, 12. *D. N. Marshall*, i. 1; *Dr. S. Hales. A Serv.*; *F. Arnold*, 228.

*rr.* 12. 16. *S. C. Wilks*, 142.

"As prisoners in castles look out of their grated windows at the smiling landscape, where the sun comes and goes, so we, from this life, as from dungeon-bars, look forth to the heavenly land, and are refreshed with sweet visions of the home that shall be ours when we are free."—*Beecher.*

[a] *Dr. G. Wilson.*

**Job is pursued with trials**

[a] "Whatever sin I might commit, it was Thy intention to watch and record it, and not to cleanse me from my guilt.' The words represent an inner travail of spirit, a struggle between the consciousness of sin which Job never disguises, and the feeling that the sin, not being wilful, was not sufficient to account for his sufferings."—*Spk. Com.*

[b] Ex. xxxiv. 6, 7; Is. iii. 11; Ro. ii. 8, 9.

[c] Lu. xvii. 10.

[d] Ex. iii. 7. 8.

[e] *Homilist.*

"I will labour not to be like a young colt first set to plough, who more tires himself out with his own untoward-

preter's house, which had water poured on it on one side of the wall against which it blazed, and oil on the other. Here one tissue is burning like fuel, and there another is becoming the depository of combustible matter. We have as it were millions of microscopic wind-furnaces, converting into carbonic acid, water, vapour, and other products of combustion, all the combustible elements of the body; and millions of blast-furnaces reducing the starch and sugar of the food, and the sulphates and phosphates of the body, into inflammable oils and other fuels, which are finally transferred to the wind-furnaces, and burned there. Burning, and what we must call, in contradistinction, unburning, thus proceed together; the flame of life, like a blowpipe flame, exhibiting an oxidising and a reducing action, at points not far distant from each other. Such is the human body, ever changing, ever abiding; a temple always complete, and yet always under repair; a mansion which quite contents its possessor, and yet has its plans and materials altered each moment; a machine which never stops working, and yet is taken to pieces in the twinkling of an eye, and put together in the other; a cloth of gold, to which the needle is ever adding on one side of a line, and from which the scissors are ever cutting away on the other. Yes, life, like Penelope of old, is ever weaving and unweaving the same web, whilst her grim suitors, Disease and Death, watch for her halting; only for her there is no Ulysses who will one day in triumph return.[e]

**14—16.** (14) **then . . me,** Thou didst watch me.[a] (15) **if . . me,**[b] for punishment is my due. **and . . head,** for I can claim no merit or reward. **I . . confusion,**[c] whether wicked or righteous. (16) **increaseth,**[d] the more I think, the more I am confused. **thou . . lion,** active, watchful, ready to spring on its prey. **again . . me,** inflicting marvellous and mysterious trials.

*Man's confusion and God's order* (*v.* 15).—I. Man's confusion. 1. The conflict between health and disease; 2. The conflict between family order and domestic confusion; 3. The conflict between friendship and alienation; 4. The conflict between inheritance and destitution; 5. The conflict between spiritual good and evil. II. God's order. 1. Bodily order: 2. Family order; 3. Social order; 4. Circumstantial order; 5. Moral order.[e]

*Imputed righteousness.*—When we walk abroad on a beautiful day, and survey a landscape lit up by the beams of a summer sun, our eye catches a variety of colours lying on the surface of this landscape,—there is the yellow of the golden grain, the green of the pasture land, the dark brown of those thickly planted copses, the silver gleam of the stream which winds through them, the faint blue of distant hills seen in perspective, the more intense blue of the sky, the purple tinge of yonder sheet of water; but none of these colours reside in the landscape, they are not the properties of the material objects on which they rest. All colours are wrapped up in the sunlight, which, as is well known, may be seen resolved into its elementary colours in the prism or rainbow. Apart from the sunlight no object has any colour: as is shown by the fact that as soon as light is withdrawn from the landscape, the colours fade from the robe of nature. The difference of colour in different objects, while the sun is shining, is produced by some subtle difference of texture or superficies, which makes each object absorb certain rays, and

reflect certain other rays, in different proportions. Now Christ is the Sun of Righteousness, in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily—the fair colour of every grace and Christian virtue. When Christ is shining upon the heart, then these virtues are manifested there, by one Christian grace of one description, by another of another, according to their different receptivity and natural temperament, just as, when the sun is shining, colours are thrown upon a landscape, and reflected by the different objects in different proportions. But as no part of the landscape has any colour in the absence of the sun, nor can acquire any independently of the sun, so Christians have no grace except from Christ, nor hold any virtue independently of Him.[f]

**17–19.** (17) **renewest,** Thou wouldst call up new. **changes . . me,** *lit.* host upon host. (18, 19) **wherefore . . womb?** here Job reverts to his first wish.[a]

*The destructive force of suffering* (*v.* 18).—The sufferings of Job had destroyed within him for a time—I. A sense of duty. II. A love of life. III. Hope of hereafter. IV. Learn—1. That great suffering in this word in the case of individuals does not mean great sin; 2. The power of the devil over man; 3. The value of the Gospel.

*Afflictions awakening gratitude.*—Afflictions when sanctified make us grateful for mercies which aforetime we treated with indifference. We sat for half an hour in a calf's shed the other day, quite grateful for the shelter from the driving rain, yet at no other time would we have entered such a hovel. Discontented persons need a course of the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, to cure them of the wretched habit of murmuring. Even things which we loathed before, we shall learn to prize when in troublous circumstances. We are no lovers of lizards, and yet at Pont St. Martin, in the Val d'Aosta, where the mosquitoes, flies, and insects of all sorts drove us nearly to distraction, we prized the little green fellows, and felt quite an attachment to them as they darted out their tongues and devoured our worrying enemies. Sweet are the uses of adversity, and this among them—that it brings into proper estimation mercies aforetime lightly esteemed.[b]—*Noble piety nourished by affliction.*—The pine, placed nearly always among scenes disordered and desolate, brings into them all possible elements of order and precision. Lowland trees may lean to this side and that, though it is but a meadow breeze that bends them, or a bank of cowslips from which their trunks lean aslope. But let storm and avalanche do their worst, and let the pine find only a ledge of vertical precipice to cling to, it will nevertheless grow straight. Thrust a rod from its last shoot down the stem, it shall point to the centre of the earth as long as the tree lives. Amid the sternest trials the most upright Christians are usually reared. The Divine life within them so triumphs over every difficulty as to render the men, above all others, true and exact. What a noble spectacle is a man whom nothing can warp, a firm, decided servant of God, defying hurricanes of temptation![c]

**20–22** (20) **are . . few?** *etc.*,[a] since life is so short, allow me a little respite fr. suffering. (21) **before . . return,**[b] to the grave.[c] **to . . darkness,** an ill. of early ideas of death and the grave.[d] (22) **a . . darkness,** of shadows;[e] light intercepted. **as . . itself,** thick darkness, as when the sun is set. **without**

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ness (whipping himself with his misspent mettle: than with the weight of what he draws; and will labour to bear patiently what is imposed upon me."—*Fuller.*

*f Dr. Goulbourn.*

**Job regrets that he ever lived**

*a* Job iii., vi. 3.

The more a tree of righteousness is shaken by the wind, the more it is rooted in Christ.

*v.* 17. See *Se s.* by *C. Buck.*

*b Spurgeon.*

"Oh, what an excellent interpreter is experience. Taste and see; for thus the serious Christian getteth a view of the Scripture and spiritual things which the most subtle and piercing eye of unsanctified schoolmen cannot reach; yea, by the practice of truth, nearness to God, and retiring of the soul to Him, hath oft obtained more light in one hour than others by many days, poring their judgment and invention on the rack."—*Fleming.*

*c Spurgeon.*

**he pleads for rest on the ground that life is short**

*a* Ps. xxxix. 5, 13. *b* 2 Sa. xii. 23, xiv. 14.

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. . **order,** chaotic.*f* **light . . darkness,** uncertain, flickering; not clear and pure.*g*

*Obscure ideas concerning the soul's immortality.*—Brodie Cruickshank, in his *Eighteen Years on the Gold Coast of Africa*, writing of its native population, remarks :—"They appear to have no definite ideas of the immortality of the soul. They are unanimous in thinking that there is in man a spirit which survives the body. This spirit is supposed to remain near the spot where his body has been buried. They believe it to have a consciousness of what is going on upon earth, and to have the power of exercising some influence over their destiny. Hence they worship the spirits of their deceased friends and relatives, and make pilgrimages to their graves to make oblations and sacrifices to them. But their ideas upon this subject are as absurd and contradictory as upon every other point relating to their spiritual concerns. Unless in the case of the very vilest of malefactors, they do not associate any idea of punishment in another world with crimes committed in this, or that their conduct here will have to be accounted for hereafter. With regard to a great criminal, we sometimes hear the expression made use of, 'He will die a second death in the other world;' but this sentiment seems to arise from an impression that the mere death of the body is not a sufficient punishment for such great crimes, and that a repetition of this, the heaviest calamity which can befall man, ought to be meted out to him, rather than from any conviction that he has to give an account in the world beyond the grave for crimes which he has committed here. They tell us that they have no belief in the resurrection of the body, and yet they say that after death they enter upon a new life, in many respects similar to that which they have led here. Acting upon this idea, they are in the habit of burying with the dead a portion of his valuables, in gold and handsome clothes, and placing ready to his hand a flask of rum, his pipe, and tobacco."

c "The undiscovered country, from whose bourne no traveller returns."—*Shakespeare.*

d *Virgil, Æn.* vi 259, *ff.*

e Am. iv. 13; **Is.** viii. 22, ix. 1.

f "Dark, wasteful, wild."—*Milton.*

g "No light; but rather darkness visible, served only to discover sights of woe."—*Milton.*

v. 22. *Dr. Collyer, on Scrip. Com.*

"Alas! while the body stands so broad and brawny, must the soul lie blinded, dwarfed, stupefied, almost annihilated? Alas! this was, too, a breath of God, bestowed in heaven, but on earth never to be unfolded."—*Carlyle.*

## *CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH.*

**Zophar's answer**

**Job charged with falsehood**

**1—4.** (1) **Zophar,** "the third and most passionate of Job's friends."*a* (2) **a . . talk,** *lit.* a man of lips. (3) **lies,***b* babblings, boastings. (4) **doctrine,** fair speech, taking arguments. **I . . eyes,** *i.e.* eyes of God.

*Questionable reproof.*—The reproof which Zophar addressed to Job suggests two remarks. I. The charges he brings against Job, if true, justly deserve reproof. He charges him with—1. Loquacity; 2. Falsehood; 3. Irreverence; 4. Hypocrisy. But—II. The charges, if true, could not justify the spirit and style of the reproof.*c*

*A talker* (*v.* 2).—His measure of talk is till his wind is spent, and then he is not silenced, but becalmed. His ears have catched the itch of his tongue; and though he scratch them, like a beast with his hoof, he finds a pleasure in it. He shakes a man by the ear as a dog does a pig, and never loosens his hold till he has tired himself as well as his patient. He is a walking pillory, and punishes more ears than a dozen standing ones. He will hold any argument rather than his tongue, and maintain both sides at his own charge; for he will tell you what you will say, though

a *Wordsworth.*

b Pr. x. 19; Ja. i. 19; Ac. xvii. 18.

c *Dr. Thomas.* "Bad words are as influential as the plague and the pestilence. They have wrought more evil than battle, murder, and sudden death. They creep through the ear into the heart, call up all its bad passions, and tempt it to break

perhaps he does not intend to give you leave. His tongue is always in motion, though very seldom to the purpose; like a barber's scissors, which are kept snipping as well when they do not cut, as when they do. He is so full of words that they run over, and are thrown away to no purpose; and so empty of things, or sense, that his dryness has made his leaks so wide. whatsoever is put in him runs out immediately. He is so long delivering himself, that those that hear him desire to be delivered too, or despatched out of their pain.[d]

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God's commandments. A few bad words got into the ear of the mother of mankind; and they led her on to eat the forbidden fruit, and thus to bring death into the world."—*G. Mogridge.*

*d But er.*

**he wishes that God would speak**

**5, 6.** (5) **oh . . speak,** *etc.*, ref. to Job's wish[a] that God would address him. Zophar sug. that if God were to reply, Job would be convinced of his guilt. (6) **double**[b] **. . is,** double in reality, or substance. Double of your ideas about them. **less . . deserveth,**[c] His ideas of sin and holiness being the double of yours, your punishment is less than you deserve.

*Necessary teaching.*—We have suggested to us that teaching which is essential to the well-being of man. I. It is intercourse with the mind of God. II. It is instruction in the wisdom of God. III. It is faith in the forbearing love of God. This is the necessary teaching. We do not say that Zophar meant this, but this is what his words suggest.[d]

*Ignorance of future trouble.*—Ignorance of future miseries is a privilege, when knowledge is ineffectual to prevent them. Unseen evils are swallowed whole, but by an apprehensive imagination are tasted in all their bitterness. By forethoughts we run to meet them before they are come, and feel them before they are truly sensible. This was the reason of that complaint in the poet. seeing the prognostics of misery many years before it arrived—"Let the evils Thou preparest surprise us; let us not be tormented by an unhappy expectation of them; let the success of future things be concealed from our sight; let it be permitted to us to hope in the midst of our fears." Indeed, God has mercifully hid the most of future events from human curiosity. For, as on the one side, by the view of great prosperity, man would be tempted to an excess of pride and joy, so on the other (as we are more sensibly touched with pain or pleasure), if, when he begins to use his reason and apprehensive faculty, by a secret of optics he should have in one sight presented all the afflictions that should befall him in the world, how languishing would his life be! This would keep him on a perpetual rack, and make him suffer together and at all times, what shall be endured separately and but once. But though the most of future things lie in obscurity. yet often we have sad intimations of approaching evils that awaken our fears. Nay, how many tempests and shipwrecks do men suffer on *terra firma*, from the suspicion of calamities that shall never be! Imaginary evils operate as if real, and produce substantial griefs. . . . An humble confidence in Him frees us from anxieties. preserves a firm, peaceful temper in the midst of storms. This gives a superiority of spirits, a true empire of mind over all outward things. What was the vain boast of philosophers—that by the power of reason they could make all accidents to contribute to their happiness—is the real privilege we obtain by a regular trust in God, who directs and orders all events that happen for the everlasting good of His servants.[e]

*a* x. 2.

*b* Ps xxv. 14; Ma. xiii 35; Ro. xvi. 25, 26.

*c* Ez. ix. 13; Ps. ciii. 10.

*d Dr. Thomas.*

"Stars shine brightest in the darkest night; torches are better for beating; grapes come not to the proof till they come to the press; spices smell best when bruised; young trees root faster for shaking; gold looks brighter for scouring; juniper smells sweetest in the fire; the palm tree proves the better for pressing. Such is the condition of God's people: they are most triumphant when most tempted, most glorious when most afflicted."—*Bogatsky.*

"Patience, time, and money overcome everything. The world is his who has patience."—*Italian*

*e Dr. Bates.*

**the unsearchableness of God**

**7—9.** (7) **canst . . God?**[a] or, canst thou attain to His insight?[b] **canst . . perfection?** canst thou attain to the perfec-

B.C. *cir.* 1520.

*a* Ps. lxxvii. 19.

*b Spk. Com.*

*c* Is. lv. 9; Ps. cxxxix. 6–8; Am. ix. 2.

*d* Ep. iii. 18, 19; Ps. cxxxix. 9, 10, lxv 5—8.

*e C. Simeon M.A.*

*f C. S. Carey*

*v.* 7. *Dr. R. Lucas*, i 197; *Abp. Tillotson*, viii. 457; *Dr. Whitby*, 20; *W. Wishart, Theol.* i. 75; *Dr. R. Fiddes, Div.* ii. 229; *Dr. N. Marshall*, i. 78; *J. Abernethy*, ii. 219; *Dr. J. Hunt*, ii. 253; *P. Skelton*, i. 343; *J. Charlesworth*, iii. 71; *Dr. A. Grant*, ii. 91; *H. Marriott*, i. 30.

*g Dr. Thomas.*

*vv.* 7, 8. *W. Sharp*, i.; *Bp. Hobart*, ii. 133; *T. S. L. Vogan, Bamp. Lec.*

*vv.* 7—9. *Dr. J. Arrowsmith*, 234; *Dr. T. Coney*, i. 173; *Ir. W. B. Collyer Scrip. Facts.*

"And because all those scattered rays of loveliness which we behold spread up and down, all the world over, are only the emanations of that inexhaustible light which is above, then should we lose them in all that, and climb up always by those sunbeams unto the eternal Father of lights."—*John Smith.*

*h Dr. Chalmers.*

**God knows and can do all things**

*a* Is. xiv. 27; Re. iii. 7.

tion of the Almighty? (8) **it . . heaven,** *etc.*,[e] the wisdom of God comprehends all heights and depths. (9) **measure,** *etc.*,[d] it includes all lengths and breadths. That is, He is infinite in knowledge, man is finite.

*The incomprehensibility of God* (*vv.* 7—12).—I. Truly God is unsearchable—1. In the perfection of His nature; 2. In the dispensations of His providence; 3. In the operations of His grace. Then we may see—II. The folly of presuming to sit in judgment upon Him. 1. How incompetent we are to resist His will; 2. How unable we are to escape His judgment; 3. How destitute we are of everything that can qualify us for such an office. Learn—(1) To receive with meekness whatever God has revealed; (2) To bear with patience whatever God has inflicted.[e]—*God unsearchable.*—I. The truth that God is unsearchable. 1. His works are unsearchable; 2. His ways are unsearchable; 3. His revealed perfections are unsearchable. II. The lessons taught by this truth. 1. That we should trust Him, though we do not comprehend Him; 2. To look forward to progress throughout eternity.[f] —*Searching after God.*—I. This is a righteous occupation. 1. It agrees with the profoundest instinct of our souls; 2. It is stimulated by the manifestations of nature; 3. It is encouraged by the declarations of the Bible; 4. It is aided by the manifestations of Christ. II. This is a useful occupation. 1. It is spirit-quickening; 2. It is spirit-humbling; 3. It is spirit-ennobling. III. This is an endless occupation, and as such it agrees—1. With the inexhaustible powers of our nature; 2. With the instinct of mystery within us.[g]

*Incomprehensibility of God* (*v.* 7).—All the discoveries of modern science serve to exalt the Deity; but they do not contribute a single iota to the explanation of His purposes. They make Him greater, but they do not make Him more comprehensible. He is more shrouded in mystery than ever. It is not Himself whom we see, it is His workmanship; and every new addition to its grandeur or to its variety which philosophy opens to our contemplation, throws our understanding at a greater distance than before from the mind and conception of the sublime Architect. Instead of the God of a single world, we now see Him presiding, in all the majesty of His high attributes, over a mighty range of innumerable systems. To our little eye He is wrapt in more awful mysteriousness; and every new glimpse which astronomy gives us of the universe magnifies, to the apprehension of our mind, that impassable barrier which stands between the counsels of its Sovereign and those fugitive beings who strut their evanescent hour in the humblest of its mansions. If this invisible Being would only break that mysterious silence in which He has wrapt Himself, we feel that a single word from His mouth would be worth a world of darkling speculations. Every new triumph which the mind of man achieves in the field of discovery binds us more firmly to our Bible; and by the very proportion in which philosophy multiplies the wonders of God, do we prize that book on which the evidence of history has stamped the character of His authentic communication.[h]

**10—12** (10) **if he,** *etc.*,[a] who can alter, or hinder the execution of, any of His plans or purposes? (11) **knoweth . . men,**[b] hollow, empty men. **will . . it?** rather, He doth not consider it: *i.e.* it causes Him no loss of time to estimate man; He does so at

a glance. (12) **born . . colt,**[c] *i.e.* with a tendency to lawlessness.

*The universality of the kingdom of God.*—A man might as well think of going out of the dominion of Queen Victoria in removing from London to York, as the sinner think of hiding himself from God by going from light to darkness, from publicity to privacy, or from one part of the earth to the other. If he go to the heavens He is there; to the depths of the sea He is there; to the ends of the earth He is there.[d]

*Existence of God.*—

And can there be who doubt there is a God,
And life eternal! When the river flows,
Deny the fountain-head who will, the wave
That, curling, murmurs farthest from its source,
That source attests. Show me some well-wrought work
Of matter or of mind; though you produce
No author, I conclude that such there was,
Or this had never been, and give him praise.
And why should sense demur? When the poor slave,
Doom'd by some tyrant's hard decree to starve,
Wakes in his dungeon on his rocky bed,
From sleep, then wildly casts his eyes around,
As if in search of death, let him espy
In osier frame sweet herbage of the field
To greet his famished lip, and from the spring,
In earthen jar, the lucid draught to cheer
His parching tongue: will he not straight exclaim
That some kind hand hath oped his prison door,
And brought this bounty? Will he not invoke
A blessing on the donor as he tastes,
And feels the temperate tide of health return
To cool the heated vessels of his heart,
And pacify the fever in his brain?
Tell him 'twas chance—but no; you could not thus
Abuse his ear, nor wound his swelling soul
In presence of the angel Gratitude.[e]

**13, 14.** (13) **if . . heart,**[a] in contrition. **stretch . . him,**[b] in earnest prayer. (14) **if . . hand,**[c] if thou hast gotten anything unlawfully, make restitution.

*The life of the godly and the doom of the wicked* (*vv.* 13—20).—I. The life of the godly. 1. The nature of a godly life. Two leading facts are associated with it. (1) The seeking after God; (2) The abandonment of evil. 2. The blessedness of a godly life. There is in it—(1) Cheerfulness of aspect; (2) Steadfastness of mind; (3) Fearlessness of soul; (4) Deliverance from all suffering; (5) Sunliness of being. II. The doom of the wicked. 1. Here is the loss of energy; 2. Here is the loss of safety; 3. Here is the loss of hope.[d]

*A forgotten beholder.*—A man who was in the habit of going into a neighbour's corn-field to steal the ears, one day took his son with him, a boy of eight years of age. The father told him to hold the bag, while he looked if any one was near to see him. After standing on the fence, and peeping through all the corn rows, he returned and took the bag from the child, and began his guilty work. "Father," said the boy, "you forgot to look somewhere else." The man dropped the bag in a fright, and said,

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*b* Ps. xciv. 11, x 14; He. iv. 13; Re. ii 23.

*c* Ro xii. 16; 1 Co. iii. 18—20.

*d John Bate.*

There are certain pagans whose god is known as Buddha. Their priests say to the people, "Think of Buddha and you will be transformed into Buddha. If men pray to Buddha, and do not become Buddha, it is because the mouth prays and not the mind." How much greater the power of prayer sincerely offered to the Christian's God!

"He that troubles not himself with anxious thoughts for more than is necessary, lives little less than the life of angels, whilst, by a mind content with little, he imitates their want of nothing."—*Cave.*

*e Cowper.*

**he exhorts Job to put away sin**

*a* 2 Ch. xii. 14, xix. 3.

*b* La. iii. 41; Pr. xvi. 1.

*c* Ez. xviii. 30, 31; Is. i. 16; Ja. iv. 8.

*d Dr. Thomas.*

*vv.* 13, 14. *Dr J. Langhorne*, ii. 61.

*vv.* 14, 15. *R. Farrington*, 144.

"Patience! why, 'tis the soul of peace; of all the virtues, 'tis nearest kin to heaven; it makes men

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look like gods." —*Decker.*

*e Whitecross.*

**he promises comfort if he be innocent**

*a* Pr. xxviii. 1, xiv. 26; Ps. cxii. 6—8, cxix. 6.

*b* Ge. xli. 15; Is. liv. 4, lxv. 16.

*c* Pr. iv. 18; Ps. xxvii. 6, cxii. 4.

*d* Mal. iv. 2; Lu. ii. 32.

I feel that repeated afflictions come, not as lightning on the scathed tree, blasting it yet more and more, but as the strokes of the sculptor on the marble block, forming it into the image of beauty and loveliness. Let but the Divine presence be felt, and no lot is hard. Let me but see His hand, and no event is unwelcome.

Sickness, when sanctified, teaches us four things: the vanity of the world, the vileness of sin, the helplessness of man, and the preciousness of Christ.

**and adds the promise of peace and safety**

*a* Le xxvi. 5; Pr. iii. 24; Ps. iii. 5.

*b* Pr. xi. 7; Am. ix. 1.

v. 18 *Dr. N. Marshall* ii. 1.

Affliction has its dangers as well

"Which way, child?" supposing he had seen some one. "You forgot to look up to the sky, to see if God was noticing you." The father felt this reproof of the child so much, that he left the corn, returned home, and never again ventured to steal; remembering the truth his child had taught him—that the eye of God always beholds us.[e]

**15—17.** (15) **left . . spot,** stain of sin. **steadfast,**[a] molten; *i.e.* firm as metal cast by melting in the furnace: all. to furnace of affliction. (16) **waters . . away,**[b] *see* on vi. 15—17. (17) **age,** life, not "old age." **clearer . . noonday,**[c] as the sun rising out of morning mists to the brightness of noon. **thou . . morning,**[d] with the bright day before: whose clouds are dispersed.

*Past sorrows and trials forgotten.*—I. Let these thoughts be viewed in relation to the events of Providence—1. When great sufferings and calamities are prosperous events; 2. When painful occurrences are seen as subservient to interesting and joyous results. II. The text may be illustrated in reference to the work of grace—1. When the burden of guilt and the bitterness of repentance are succeeded by the joy of pardon; 2. When doubt and depression are followed by strong faith and delight in God; 3. When the emancipation of the soul shall be fully realised. Learn—What a glorious privilege to have a special interest in the God of providence.

*Rain trenches around tents* (*v.* 18).—These words taken in connection may, we think, be explained by a practice commonly resorted to in Eastern countries, when there is expectation of rain. A tent, as is well known, is supported by ropes fastened to pegs, which are firmly driven into the ground. This dwelling-place is far more secure than might be supposed in time of wind, and will stand many a severe gale; but in seasons of rain it is not so safe. The pegs are apt to get loosened in the damp earth, and the tent must of necessity be liable to fall. A lady long resident in the East, and much accustomed to life under canvas, relates how, when the wind blows cool from afar, bearing the sound of abundance of rain, the Lascars will immediately commence digging outside the tent-pegs. The ground is hard as iron with the long drought, but they persevere till they have completed trenches of at least half a foot deep round all the tents in an encampment. The rain soon falls in torrents, the trenches are filled; but the ground on which the tents are erected is comparatively dry. It is natural to suppose that in earlier days, when living in tents was so common, this custom was common also; and it is not at all improbable that Zophar the Naamathite alluded to it when, in likening the forgetting of misery to waters which pass away, he added, "Thou shalt dig about thee, and thou shalt take thy rest in safety."

**18 20.** (18) **secure,**[a] confident. **dig,** *i.e.* search: *i.e.* for grounds of alarm. (19) **lie . . afraid,** thy nights shall be peaceful. **shall . . thee,** caress thee: *lit.* stroke thy face. (20) **eyes . . fail,**[b] when they look for relief. **they . . escape,** the justice of God. **hope . . ghost,** it shall depart as the soul of one dying.

*The deceitful hope* (*v.* 20).—It is like giving up the ghost, for—I. It is giving up that which is very dear. II. Yet, dear as it is, it must be given up. III. Yes, it must be given up, and that

suddenly. IV. Depend upon it, the giving up must be soon. V. When given up it will leave no substance but perfect despair.

*The flight of time.*—

Time speeds away—away—away :
Another hour—another day—
Another month—another year—
Drop from us like the leaflets sear ;
Drop like the life-blood from our hearts ;
The rose-bloom from the cheek departs,
The tresses from the temples fall,
The eye grows dim and strange to all.

Time speeds away—away—away :
Like torrents in a stormy day,
He undermines the stately tower,
Uproots the tree and snaps the flower ;
And sweeps from our distracted breast
The friends that loved—the friends that blessed,
And leaves us weeping on the shore,
To which they can return no more.

Time speeds away—away—away :
No eagle through the skies of day,
No wind along the hills can flee
So swiftly or so smooth as he.
Like fiery steed—from stage to stage
He bears us on—from youth to age ;
Then plunges in the fearful sea
Of fathomless eternity.[c]

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as prosperity. The one is a smooth sea with rocks beneath the shining surface. The other is a troubled ocean, in a dark and stormy night.

"The hours of a wise man are lengthened by his ideas, as those of a fool are by his passions. The time of the one is long, because he does not know what to do with it ; so is that of the other because he distinguishes every moment of it with useful or amusing thoughts ; or, in other words, because the one is always wishing it away, and the other always enjoying it.' —*Addison.*

c *Knox.*

## *CHAPTER THE TWELFTH.*

**Job's reply**

**he ridicules the wisdom of his friends**

**1—3.** (2) **no doubt,** ironical. **ye . . people,**[a] the only wise men in the world. (3) **understanding,**[b] *lit.* heart.[c] **I . . you,** in power to quote and apply proverbs. **yea . . these,** these proverbs are so far fr. being original that every one knows them.

*Independency of thought in religion* (*vv.* 1—5).—That this is man's prerogative appears from the following considerations. I. From the capacity of the soul. 1. Man has a capacity to form conceptions of the cardinal principles of religion ; 2. And a capacity to realise the practical force of these conceptions. II. From the despotism of corrupt religion. It always seeks to crush this independency of the individual soul. III. From the necessary means of personal religion. It begins in individual thinking. IV. From the condition of moral usefulness. V. From the teachings of the Bible. Men are commanded to use their reason. VI. From the transactions of the judgment. Men will have to give an account of their thoughts and words as well as deeds.[d]

*The wisdom of the wise.*—The people of the East take great pleasure in irony, and some of their satirical sayings are very cutting. When a sage intimates that he has superior wisdom, or when he is disposed to rally another for his meagre attainments, he says, "Yes, yes, you are the man!" "Your wisdom is like the sea." "You found it in dreams." "When you die, whither will wisdom go?" "You have all wisdom!" "When gone, alas!

a Je. vii. 4.

b 2 Co. xi. 5.

c With the Hebs. the heart was the seat of the understanding, and the bowels the seat of the emotions.

d *Dr. Thomas.*

"Patience is a plaster for all sores. The longest day will have an end. When one door shuts, another opens. It is a sore battle from which none escape."—*English Proverbs.*

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what will become of wisdom?" "O the Nyāni! O the philosopher!"[e]

**4—6.** (4) **I . . neighbour,**[a] the sense is obscure. Prob. Job meant that he felt himself as a butt for his neighbours' scorn. **who . . him,** God's treatment was so dif. from man's. (5) **he . . feet,** *i.e.* the man in adversity. **lamp,** *etc.*, either broken and of no use; or, about to be extinguished. (6) **into . . abundantly,**[b] *lit.* who bringeth God in his hand.[c]

*A want of sympathy condemned* (*v.* 5).—To mark the precise import of Job's expressions, I will set before you—I. The evil complained of. Notice—1. The terms in which the evil is expressed; 2. The evil itself. This evil prevailing so generally, I will endeavour to show—II. The state of mind which it betrays. Certainly it denotes—1. A want of Christian knowledge; 2. A want of Christian experience; 3. A want of Christian feeling. Behold then—(1) The benefit of affliction; (2) The excellency of the Gospel.[d]

*A despised lamp* (*v.* 5).—D'Oyley and Mant quote from Caryl and Poole as follows:—"A despised lamp is of the same signification with a smoking firebrand; which last is a proverb for that which is almost spent, and therefore despised and thrown away as useless." In view of these observations, it is worthy of notice that of a man who is much despised, or who is very contemptible, it is said, "That fellow is like the half-consumed firebrand of the funeral pile." Job, by his enemies was counted as a despised lamp. When a person is sick unto death, it is said, "His lamp is going out." After death, "His lamp has gone out." When a person is indisposed, should a lamp give a dim light, the people of the house will become much alarmed, as they think it a bad sign. A lamp, therefore, which burns dimly (as did that of Job) will be lightly esteemed.[e]

**7—10.** (7) **but . . beasts,** *etc.*,[a] so far fr. these three friends having a monopoly of wisdom, all creation was full of illustrations of Divine wisdom, and capable of instructing them. **teach . . till,** *etc.*, that God does not deal with His creatures acc. to their character. (8) **earth,** perh. in ref. to noxious plants thriving as well as useful ones. **fishes,** of whom the mighty prey on the weak. (9) **who . . these,** *etc.*,[b] *i.e.* by all these: *i.e.* by these things the great truths of Divine sovereignty and power may be learned. **Lord,** the word Jehovah occurs here only in Job's addresses, and those of his friends. (10) **soul,**[c] life. **every . . mankind,** all are subject to the rule of one sovereign God.

*God's treatment of man in this world not according to human character.*—Three things show this. I. The experience of human life. The prosperity of the wicked is—1. One of the most common facts in human experience; 2. One of the most perplexing facts in human experience; 3. One of the most predictive facts in human experience.[d]—*The history of inferior life.*—The creatures of God may be studied in two aspects. I. As a revelation of God: His wisdom, goodness, superintending care. II. As a revelation of duty: they teach us by their conduct how we should act. 1. They act in harmony with the laws of their nature, so should we; 2. They seek their pleasure from the true source, so should we; 3 They answer the ends of their existence, so should we.

*The earth as a teacher.*—To the attentive ear all the earth is

e *Roberts.*

**he reproves them for shallow judgments**

*a* Ps. xxii. 7, 8; Ma. xxvii. 29; Heb. xi. 36.

*b* Ps. xxxvii. 35, lxxiii. 12; Mal. iii 15.

*c* "Who has no god but his own hand, or weapon."—*Spk. Com.*

*d C. Simeon.*

*vv.* 6—25. *A. Fuller, Wks.* 509.

There goes a rumour that I am to be banished. And let it come if God so will. The other side of the water is my Father's ground as well as this side.

*e Roberts.*

**he directs them to nature as a teacher**

*a* Pr. vi. 6; Is. i. 3; Je. viii. 7

*b* 1 Sa. ii. 7.

*c* Da. v. 23; Ps. civ. 29, 30.

*vv.* 7—10. *J. Doughty, Ten Disc.*; *J. Styles*, i. 273; *D. W. Garrow*, 371.

*d Dr. Thomas.*

"You have marked the spring as it has unfolded its mantle, and hung it gracefully on the shoulders of the hills, and spread its gifts of flowers on the lap of the grateful earth; that is a manifestation of God's all-

eloquent; to the reflecting mind all nature is symbolical. Each object has a voice which reaches the inner ear, and speaks lessons of wise and solemn import. The streams murmur unceasingly its secrets; the sybilline breeze in mountain glens and in lonely forests sings forth its oracles. The face of nature is everywhere written over with Divine characters, which he who runs may read. But beside the most obvious lessons which lie, as it were, on the surface of the earth, and which suggest themselves to us often, when we are least disposed for inquiry or reflection, there are more recondite lessons which she teaches to those who make her structure and arrangements their special study, and who penetrate to her secret arcana. She has loud tones for the careless and superficial, and low suggestive whispers to those who hear with an instructive and attentive mind. She has beautiful illustrations to fascinate the childish, and solemn earnest truths in severe forms to teach the wise: and those who read her great volume, admiring with the poet and lover of nature the richly coloured and elaborate frontispieces and illustrations, but not arrested by these—passing on, leaf after leaf, to the quiet and sober chapters of the interior—will find in these internal details revelations of the deepest interest. As we step over the threshold, and penetrate into the inner chambers of nature's temple, we may leave behind us the beauty of the gardens and ornamental parterres, but we shall find new objects to compensate us—cartoons more wonderful than those of Raphael adorning the walls, friezes grander than those of the Pantheon, sculptures more awe-inspiring than those which have been disinterred from the temples of Karnac and Assyria. In descending into the crust of the earth we lose sight of the rich robe of vegetation which adorns the surface, the beauties of tree and flower, forest, hill, and river, and the ever-changing splendours of the sky; but we shall observe enough to make up for it all in the extraordinary relics of ancient worlds strewn around us and beneath our feet.[e]

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transforming power. You have marked the bustering winter, as it has torn off that verdant robe, and blown out the floral lights, that, too, is a display of God's all changing power."—*Dr. J Parker.*

"Thy might is self-creative, and Thy works, immortal, temporal, destructible, are ever in Thy sight and blessed there. The heavens are Thy bosom, and Thine eye is high o'er all existence; yea, the worlds are but Thy shining foot-prints upon space."—*Bailey.*

"The noblest mind the best contentment has."—*Spenser.*

*e Hugh Macmillan.*

**he refers them to the voice of experience**

**11—13.** (11) **doth . . words,** man has the faculty of attending to the voices of men and nature, and discriminating sense and sound. **mouth,** palate. (12) **ancient,** aged. **wisdom,** *etc.*, this would be more likely at a time when knowledge was gained by experience and observation. (13) **with him,** *i.e.* with God.[a]

*The maxims of philosophic life* (*v.* 11).—There is something like a syllogism in this verse. I. That the more the mind exercises itself upon moral questions the more capable it is to pronounce a correct judgment. II. That the ancients did greatly exercise their minds on these subjects, and therefore their judgment is to be taken.[b]—*Job's address concerning God* (*vv.* 13—25).—Probably Job uses this lofty language concerning God for two reasons. I. To show that he could speak as grandly of the Eternal as his friends had spoken. They had often given to him sublime descriptions of the nature and operations of their Maker; and peradventure they had done this to impress the patriarch with their mental superiority. Job here shows that he can match them in this respect; his strains are as lofty as theirs, and his ideas as philosophic and grand. II. To show that he had as correct and extensive a view of God's agency as they had. He gives them to understand that he sees God working everywhere.[c]—*Job's ideas of the Divine agency.*—I. That it is active both in the mental and moral world. II. That it is destructive as well as restorative.

*a* Pr. viii. 14; Is. xl. 13, 14; Ro. xi. 34; Is. xlvi. 10; Ja. i. 5; Col. ii. 2, 3.

*b Dr. Thomas.*

*c Ibid.*

"Although the living members of Christ be never without trouble in this world, but always exercised under the cross, yet the cause and consideration why God will have them thus exercised, is either for the honour and glory of His own name, or the profit,

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commoditie, and exceeding benefit of them whom He thus afflicteth, or for both these considerations toge her." —*T. Timme.*

*d* *Dr. Thomas.* "He that would make a real progress in knowledge must dedicate his age as well as youth—the latter-growth as well as the first-fruits—at the altar of truth."—*Bishop Berkeley.*

**he asserts that power and wisdom are with God**

*a* Mal. i. 4.

*b* Je. xiv. 22; Na. i. 4; Ja. v. 17, 18.

*c* Ez. xiv. 9; 1 Ki. xxii. 21–23.

"God uses not the rod, where He means to use the sword." —*Bishop Hall.*

**and that He confounds the wise and mighty**

*a* 2 Sa. xvii. 14; Is. xix. 12, xxix. 14; 1 Co i. 19, 20.

As every mercy is a drop obtained from the ocean of God's goodness, so every affliction is a drachm weighed out in the wisdom of God's providence.

III. That it extends to individuals as well as to communities. IV. That it is absolutely sovereign and resistless. V. That it operates in the unseen as well as in the visible. VI. That it in no case appears to recognise moral distinctions among men.[d]

*Pursuit of knowledge* (*v.* 11).—Some years ago an effort was made to collect all the chimney sweepers in the city of Dublin, for the purpose of education. Among others came a little fellow, who was asked if he knew his letters. "Oh, yes," was the reply. "Do you spell?" "Oh, yes," was again the answer. "Do you read?" "Oh, yes." "And what book did you learn from?" "Oh, I never had a book in my life, sir." "And who was your schoolmaster?" "Oh, I never was at school." Here was a singular case; a boy could read and spell without a book or a master. But what was the fact? Why, another little sweep, a little older than himself, had taught him to read by showing him the letters over the shop doors which they passed as they went through the city. His teacher, then, was a little sweep like himself, and his book the sign-boards on the houses. What may not be done by trying!

**14—16.** (14) **he . . down,**[a] cities, houses, personal estates. **and . . again,** except He permit. **he . . man,** in poverty, sorrow, etc. (15) **water's,**[b] rain, springs. (16) **deceived . . his,**[c] *lit.* are to Him: *i.e.* subservient to the working out of His plans.

*The power of God* (*v.* 15).—King Canute, a Danish conqueror of Britain, was one day flattered by his courtiers on account of his power. Then he ordered his throne to be placed by the sea-side. The tide was rolling in, and threatened to drown him. He commanded the waves to stop. Of course, they did not. Then he said to his flatterers, "Behold, how small is the might of kings!" —*The power of God.*—The Thracians had a very striking emblem expressive of the almighty power of the Deity. It was a sun with three beams—one shining upon a sea of ice, and dissolving it; another upon a rock and melting it; and a third upon a dead man, and putting new life into him. How admirably may all this be used to illustrate the Gospel, which an inspired Apostle calls, "The power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth it!" It melts the hardest heart into uniform obedience to the Divine will, and raises those who were dead in trespasses and sins to a life of righteousness.

**17, 18.** (17) **counsellors,**[a] great and wise men; also politic schemers. **spoiled,** stripped of office and power. **maketh . . fools,** in human estimation, by the overthrow of their plans. (18) **he . . kings,** with which they hold others in bondage. **and . . girdle,** that they be led in captivity themselves.

*Omnipotence of God.*—The omnipotency or infinity of His power consisteth in an ability to act, perform, and produce whatsoever can be acted and produced, without any possibility of impediment or resistance, and in this respect He is represented to us as an "Almighty God." And, therefore, such an omnipotency we ascribe unto Him, which is sufficiently delivered in the Scriptures. First, by the testimony of an angel. "For with God nothing shall be impossible" (Luke i. 37). Secondly, by the testimony of Christ Himself, who said, "With men it is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible" (Mark x. 27). Now He, to whom all things are possible, and to whom nothing is impossible,

is truly and properly omnipotent. Thus whatsoever doth not in itself imply a repugnancy of being or subsisting, hath, in reference to the power of God, a possibility of production; and whatsoever, in respect of the power of God, hath an impossibility of production, must involve in itself a repugnancy or contradiction.[b]

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*b Bp. Pearson.*

**19—21.** (19) **princes,**[a] *Heb.* priests. The chief of a tribe was at that time both prince and priest.[b] (20) **speech,** *lit.* lip. "He takes away the power of giving safe counsel or good advice."[c] **taketh . . aged,** on whose wise speech the young relied. (21) **he . . princes,**[d] by making them objects of scorn. **and . . mighty,** *see marg.*

*The trusty.*—The term seems, in this present place, to imply something more than "of the aged," as it is commonly rendered; and rather intimates, "the aged officially convened in public council;" whence it is rendered "senators" by Schultens and Dr. Stock: but elders, or eldermen, is a more general term, and hence more extensively appropriate, as well as more consonant with what ought ever to be the unaffected simplicity of Biblical language. Though the term senators includes the idea of age, it includes it more remotely. In Gen l. 7, we have a similar use of the term elders: for we are told that "when Joseph went up into the land of Canaan to bury his father, with him went all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his house, and all the elders of the land of Egypt;" in other words, the chief officers of state, the privy counsellors, and the entire senate or body of legislators, chosen from the land or people.[e]

**and makes them incapable of ruling and advising**

*a* Da. ii. 21.

*b* As Melchizedek and Jethro.

*c Barnes.*

*d* Jos. x. 24, 42; I Sa. xvii. 50; Is. xlv. 1.

A saint may suffer without sinning, but he cannot sin without suffering.

The vessels of mercy are seasoned with affliction, and then the wine of glory is poured in.

*e Good.*

**22, 23.** (22) **he . . darkness,** He leads forth invention, discovery, and truths that were hidden. (23) **he,** *etc.*,[a] as hist. abundantly proves.

*Note on ver.* 22.—The author of the poem discovers a great partiality for this figure: the reader can scarcely fail to recollect its occurrence in ch. x. 21, 22. In the present instance, however, it appears to be used in a different sense, and to allude, in characteristic imagery, to the dark and recondite plots, the deep and desperate designs, of traitors and conspirators, or other state villains: for it should be observed that the entire passage has a reference to the machinery of a regular and political government; and that its general drift is to imprint upon the mind of the hearer the important doctrine that the whole of the constituent principles of such a government, its officers and institutions, its monarch and princes, its privy counsellors, judges, and ministers of state; its chieftains, public orators, and assembly of elders; its nobles, or men of hereditary rank; and its stout, robust peasantry, as we should express it in the present day; nay, the deep, designing villains that plot in secret its destruction—that the nations themselves, and the heads or sovereigns of the nations, are all and equally in the hands of the Almighty; that with Him human pomp is poverty, human excellence turpitude, human judgment error, human wisdom folly, human dignities contempt, human strength weakness.[b]

**He brings hidden things to light**

*a* Is. iii. 1—3.

*v.* 23. *T. Belsham,* ii. 201.

"Affliction is the wholesome soil of virtue; where patience, honour, sweet humility, calm fortitude, take root and strongly flourish."—*D. Mallet.*

"The desire of knowledge, like the thirst of riches, increases ever with the acquisition of it."—*Sterne.*

*b Dr. M. Good.*

**24, 25.** (24) **heart,** intelligence. **of . . people,**[a] rulers. **wander . . way,** rulers without a policy, and full of perplexity. (25) **grope . . light,** trying to feel their way. **stagger,** wander. **like . . man,**[b] reeling, and unable to walk with certainty.

**He takes away the confidence of men**

*a* Is. xxiii. 9; Ex. viii. 2, 6, 16,

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24: Da. iv. 33; Ac. xii. 23.

*b* Ps. cvii. 27; Ac. xiii. 11.

There is more evil in a drop of sin than in a sea of affliction.

"The most difficult thing in life is to know yourself"—*Thales.*

*A drunkard rebuked.*—A rich drunkard kept two monkeys for his sport. One day he looked into his dining-room, where he and his guests had left some wine, and the two had mounted the table, and were helping themselves generously to the wine—jabbering and gesturing, as they had seen their master and his guests. In a little time they exhibited all the appearance of drunken men. First they were merry, and jumped about; but soon they got to fighting on the floor, and tearing out one another's hair. The drunkard stood in amazement. "What!" said he, "is this a picture of myself? Do the brutes rebuke me?" It so affected his mind, that he resolved he would never drink another drop; and from that day he was never known to be any other than a sober and a happy man.

## *CHAPTER THE THIRTEENTH.*

he retorts their charge of falsehood

**1—5.** (1) **lo . . this,** *etc.*, *i.e.* I have seen illus. and proofs of this. (2) **what . . also,** *see* xii. 4. (3) **surely . . Almighty,**[a] rather than to men. **I . . God,**[b] what he believes about God and what he sees of God's doings seem not to agree, and only God can explain. (4) **forgers,**[c] *lit.* plasterers. **all . . value,**[d] they came without being sent for, and had no remedy to offer.[e] (5) **O . . peace,**[f] and that would make for Job's peace. **and . . wisdom,**[g] for now your speech betrays your folly.

*Speaking to God* (*v.* 3).—This speaking to God—I. Implies the highest practical recognition of the Divine existence. II. Involves the truest relief of our social natures. Before a man will unbosom his soul to another he must be certified of three things. 1. That the other feels the deepest interest in him; 2. Will make the fullest allowance for his infirmities; 3. Will assist him in his trials. III. The most effective method of spiritual discipline. IV. Reveals the highest honour of created spirit.[h]

*A charlatan.*—Count Cagliostro sold at an enormous price the "Balm of Life," and declared he had already attained an age of two hundred years; and that with the use of this wonderful medicine he was entirely insensible to poison. When descanting one day at Strasburg before a large audience, he made the statement that he was invulnerable to poisons. A physician who was present left the room privately and obtained two pills. Coming back to the hall where the Count was haranguing the people, he approached him, and said, "Here, my worthy Count, are two pills—the one contains a mortal poison, the other is perfectly innocent. Choose one of them and swallow it, and I engage to take that which you leave. This will be considered a decisive proof of your medical skill, and enable the public to ascertain the efficacy of your extolled elixir." Cagliostro struggled with the situation, made many apologies, but would not touch the pill. His opponent swallowed both, and then proved by the apothecary that they were simply common bread.

a Jo. xii. 1; Ps. lxxiii.

*b* Is. i. 18—20.

*c* Ps. cxix. 69.

*d* Je. vi. 14, viii. 11; Ez. xxxiv. 4; Ho. v. 13; Jo. xlvi. 11.

*e* "Quacks, not physicians, in the cure of souls."—*T. Hood.* — "*A numine salus,*" the motto on the coach of an eminent quack, was translated by Ld. Mansfield, "God help the patient."

*f* Am. v. 13.

*g* Pr. xvii. 28.

*h Dr. Thomas.*

If in all our afflictions Christ is afflicted, surely we may take comfort in His sympathy.

he reproves them for false zeal in the defence of things holy

**6—9.** (6) **hear,** *etc.*, in reply to the wise things you have said. (7) **will . . God?**[a] defending God's ways and character on wrong principles. **talk . . him,** not only should the truth be stated, but stated truly. (8) **will . . person?**[b] do you think to flatter God, by condemning me. **will . . God?** as a special pleader. (9) **is . . out?** what would be the result if God were to examine

a 2 Co. iv. 2.

the arguments you employ in defence of Him, and in explanation of my condition. **one . . another**, with specious, deluding statements.

*God-dishonouring zeal in religion* (*vv.* 6, 7).—I. Men sometimes set forth false views in order to honour God. II. Those views are an insult to the Almighty and exposed to His displeasure. III. Those views are irreverent and rotten.[c]

*Papacy* (*vv.* 7, 8).—

Or sit upon thy throne of lies,
A poor, mean idol, blood-besmeared,
Whom even its worshippers despise,
Unhonoured, unrevered.

Yet, Scandal of the World! from thee
One needful truth mankind shall learn—
That kings and priests to liberty
And God are false in turn.

Earth wearies of them, and the long
Meek sufferance of the heavens doth fail;
Woe for weak tyrants when the strong
Wake, struggle, and prevail!

Not vainly Roman hearts have bled
To feed the crozier and the crown;
If, roused thereby, the world shall tread
The twin-born vampires down.[d]

**10—13.** (10) **if . . persons,**[a] through partiality. (11) **excellency,** exaltation, majesty, glory. **afraid,**[b] of His righteous anger. (12) **remembrances,**[c] the proverbs you store in your memories. **ashes,** things light, valueless. **bodies,** *lit.* fortresses: *i.e.* your strongest arguments. **clay,** like a clay stronghold, the argument behind which they entrenched themselves would soon crumble to pieces. (13) **hold,** *etc.*, *see marg.* **let . . will,** "Strike, but hear me."

*The providence of God.*—Must not the conduct of a parent seem very unaccountable to a child when its inclinations are thwarted: when it is put to learn letters; when it is obliged to swallow bitter physic; to part with what it likes, and to suffer, and do, and see many things done, contrary to its own judgment? Will it not, therefore, follow from hence, by a parity of reason, that the little child man, when it takes upon itself to judge of parental Providence—a thing of yesterday to criticise the economy of the Ancient of Days—will it not follow, I say, that such a judge of such matters must be apt to make very erroneous judgments, esteeming those things in themselves unaccountable which he cannot account for! and concluding of some things, from an appearance of arbitrary carriage towards him, which is suited to his infancy and ignorance, that they are in themselves capricious or absurd, and cannot proceed from a wise, just, and benevolent God?[d]

**14—16** (14) **wherefore . . teeth,**[a] a prov. of wh. the sense and the application are obscure. The meaning seems to be that he would not shrink to endanger himself in argument since God was righteous and merciful, and would not take advantage of his ignorance. (15) **though,** *etc.*,[b] or, "lo, He may slay me, yet will I wait for Him." **but . . maintain,** *etc.*, I will vindicate my

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*b* Ro. x. 2; Is xxviii. 22.

"We may not lie for the glory of God"—*Sp. Sanderson*, ii. 57.

*c* *Dr. Thomas.*

*v.* 7. *Dr. J. Duchal*, ii. 299.

*v.* 9. *S. de la Douespe*, 116; *G. J. Zollikoffer*, ii. 4.

*d* *J. G. Whittier*, who says of his lines—"The severity of the writer's language finds its ample apology in the reluctant confession of one of the most eminent Romish priests, the eloquent and devoted Father Ventura."

**he exhorts them to reverence for God, and silence**

*a* Pr. xxiv. 23; Ps. lxxxii. 2; Ja. ii. 1, 9.

*b* Je. v. 22; Ro. xv. 4

*c* Ps. xxxiv. 16.

"Dust are your stored-up savings"—*Good.* "Your maxims are words of dust."—*Noyes.*

"The seeds of knowledge may be planted in childhood, but must be cultivated in public."—*Dr. Johnson.*

*d* *Berkeley.*

**he avows his undiminished confidence in God**

*a* Is. ix. 20; 1 Co. xv. 30—31.

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*b* Pr. xiv 32; Ps. xxiii. 4; Ro viii. 38, 39; 1 Jo. iii. 21.

*c* Is. xii. 2; Je. iii. 23; Ac. iv. 12.

*d T. N. Toller.*

*e Prof. J. Peters.*

*f Dr. Thomas.*

*v.* 15. *Dr. R. Clark*, 305; *Dr. J. Donne*, iv. 537; *Bp. Seabury*, ii. 29; *C. Atkinson*, 331; *J. H. Newman*, iv. 133; *Dr. E. B. Pusey*, i. 91. *vv.* 15, 16. *J. Alting, Op.* 2, *Par.* 2, 164.

*g Dr. Thomas. v.* 16. *Dr. S. Clark*, x. 219.

"Knowledge will not be acquired without pains and application. It is troubles ome and deep digging for pure waters; but when once you come to the spring they rise up and meet you."—*Felton.*

*h Roberts.*

**he prays them to give heed to his words**

*a* Ps. xxxvii. 6; Job xlii. 9; Is. l. 8.

*b Dr. Bonar.*

"Those who have suffered much are like those who know many languages; they have learned to understand and be understood by all."—*Mad. Swetchine.*

**he prays that his afflictions may be less, and a trial vouchsafed**

sincerity. (16) **he . . salvation,**[e] *lit.* He is unto me for salvation: *i.e.* I will trust, and He will save me.

*Steady trust in God* (*v.* 15).—I. The text expresses a great and extraordinary apprehension. II. A holy fixed trust in God, as consistent with these distressing apprehensions. III. How this seemingly inconsistent temper will express itself. IV. Under what restrictions this temper is warrantable.[d]—*Holy resolution.*—Notice—I. The situation in which Job was placed. 1. A great change had taken place in his worldly prospects; 2. Still his case was not hopeless; 3. Where shall we look for any comfort for Job? 4. Even his wife was against him; 5. His friends were of little help to him. II. His determination. 1. It was at the great crisis of his life; 2. He might confidently trust in the Lord; 3. His trust was of the right kind.—*B. Bailey.*—*Absolute faith.*—I. Faith is direct knowledge. II. Faith acts on a person. III. It concerns the weightiest destinies of the soul, and is attested by conscience.[e]—*The unconquerableness of trust in religion.*—Here is—I. A manifest possibility. II. A lamentable calamity. III. A triumphant piety.—*The consciousness of sincerity in religion.*—Job felt that he was no hypocrite, and because he believed this—I. He knew that he would be saved. II. He was not afraid to speak. III. He knew that he should be acquitted of falsehood. IV. He was content to leave his cause with justice.[g]

*Note on v.* 15.—When a master chastises an affectionate slave, or tells him to leave his service, he says, "My lord, though you slay me, yet will I trust in you." Does a husband beat his wife, she exclaims, "My husband, though you kill me, I will not let you go." "Kill me, my lord, if you please, but I will not leave you: I trust in you." "Oh! beat me not; do I not trust in you?" "What an affectionate wife that is: though her husband cut her to pieces, yet she trusts in him." "The fellow is always beating her, yet she confides in him."[h]

**17—19.** (17) **hear,** *etc.*, he invites them to closely watch his line of argument. (18) **ordered,** arranged. **justified,**[a] declared righteous. (19) **who . . me?** argue against me. **if I hold,** *etc.*, Heb. for now I will be silent, and die; *i.e.* if any one can rebut what I have said, I will say no more.

*The soul turning from man to God.*—Mark the attitude of a saint towards God. I. It is confidence. II. It is confidence as a sinner. III. It is confidence arising from God's character alone IV. It is confidence in spite of all accusers.[b]

*A rock to rest on.*—The Rev. John Rees, of Crown-street, Soho, London, was visited on his death-bed by the Rev. John Liefchild, who very seriously asked him to describe the state of his mind. This appeal to the honour of his religion roused him; it freshened his dying lamp, and raising himself up in his bed, he looked his friend in the face, and with great deliberation, energy, and dignity, uttered the following words:—"Christ in His person, Christ in the love of His heart, and Christ in the power of His arm, is the Rock on which I rest; and now (reclining his head on the pillow), death, strike!"

**20—22.** (20) **two things,** stated in next verse. (21) **withdrawn . . me,**[a] remove my affliction, etc. **let . . afraid,** so that my mind may be calm to argue. (22) **call,** *i.e.* call me to the trial. **or . . speak,** let me speak first, as the plaintiff.

*The mercy and love of God.*—The great and wonderful abase-

ment of the Word's Divine person and nature, by its incarnation, should stir up in us a love of and thankfulness unto God. . . . We may gather how much He reckoned of us, by how little and low He was made for us. Oh! what matter of admiration and astonishment doth His mercy afford! The Word put on flesh; God, dust and ashes; the Potter, clay; Life, death. The veiling of God in the flesh is the revealing and manifestation of God's love unto the flesh; a manifestation of the special, extraordinary, and tender mercies of God; of the riches and treasures of His love and goodness unto mankind.[b]

**23—25.** (23) **how . . sins?** are they so many, and unpardonable? **make . . sin,** that in particular on acc. of wh. I now suffer. (24) **wherefore . . face,**[a] as if offended. **holdest,**[b] regardest. (25) **break . . fro?**[c] he compares himself to a leaf severed from the living tree, withered and driven about by the wind. **wilt . . stubble?** a poor, vain, helpless thing, unworthy the anger of God.

*Job's appeal to heaven.*—I. Here is a solemn request. And in it we have—1. The expression of the deepest instinct in man. 2. Obstacles to the religious exercises of man. II. A momentous inquiry—1. As to his sins; 2. As to his sufferings. III. A grievous complaint—1. Of the reproduction of his sins; 2. Of the embarrassment of his sufferings.[d]—*The evil of sin.*—Consider—I. How it offends a gracious God. II. How it wounds a loving Saviour. III. How it breaks a holy law. IV. How it defiles a precious soul. V. How it leads the man from good. VI. How it culminates in hell[e]—*A picture and a problem of life* (*v.* 25).—We have here—I. A picture of life. These words suggest—1. Insignificance; 2. Frailty; 3. Restlessness; 4. Worthlessness. II. A problem of life. This question may be looked upon—1. As expressing error in sentiment; 2. As capable of receiving a glorious answer.[f]

*Note on v.* 24.—Job, in his distress, makes this pathetic inquiry of the Lord. Should a great man become displeased with a person to whom he has been previously kind, he will, when he sees him approaching, avert his face, or conceal it with his hand, which shows at once what is the state of the case. The poor man then mourns, and complains, and asks, "Ah! why does he hide his face?" The wife says to her offended husband, "Why do you hide your face?" The son to his father, "Hide not your face from your son.[g]

**26—28.** (26) **writest . . me,** ref. to judicial proceedings. The "charge-sheet," "bill of indictment," filled with alleged offences. **possess,** inherit **the . . youth,** to answer for in my age, the sins I committed when young. (27) **stocks,** fetters of affliction and poverty. **lookest . . paths,** so that I cannot escape. **settest . . feet,** thou markest the print of my steps. (28) **he,** who is thus watched and fettered. **as . . thing,** going to decay, unable to resist. **garment . . eaten,**[a] worthless, will not hold together, gradually wears away.

*The sins of youth in the groans of age* (*v.* 26).—Of all periods of life that of youth is the most solemn. 1. Because where there is not godliness there is the greatest reason for gravity and gloom of spirit; 2. Where this godliness is, there is even stronger reason for joy in age than in youth. Four things illustrate this. I. Youth has its sins. The liability to which arises from—1. Want

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*a* Ps. xxxix. 10. Fasten your hold on Christ. Having Him, though my cross were as heavy as ten mountains of iron, when He putteth His sweet shoulder under me and it, my cross is but a feather. *b Jeanes.*

**he protests his great unworthiness**

*a* Ps. x. 1, lxxxviii. 14.

*b* La. ii. 5.

*c* Is. xlii. 3; Ma. xii. 20.

*d Dr. Thomas.*

*e W. W. Wythe.* Sanctified afflictions are like so many artificers, working on a pious man's crown, to make it more bright and massive.

*f Dr. Thomas.* "God is too great to be withstood, too just to do wrong, too good to delight in any man's misery. We ought, therefore, quietly to submit to His dispensations as the very best."—*Bishop Wilson.*

*g Roberts.*

**he is haunted by the sins of his past life**

*a* Ps. xxxix. 11; Ho. v. 12.

*v.* 26. *Dr. H. Wilkinson,* ii. 1; *Dr. D. Jennings,* 25; *Dr. J. Guyse,* i.; *Bp. Hurd,* vi. 393; *Dr. J. Peddie,* 459; *C. O. Pratt,* 81.

*v* 26. "'Ah! the things that man has written

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against me to the judge, are all *kassaph*, all bitter.' 'Oh! that is a bitter, bitter fault.' 'Who will make this bitterness sweet?"—*Roberts.*

*b Dr. Thomas.*

"Who is there that hath a serious reverence of God, with any due apprehensions of His holiness and a clear conviction of the evil nature of sin, who is not able to call over such actions in childhood, which most think meet to connive at, wherein they may remember that perverseity whereof they are now ashamed?"—*Dr. Owen.*

*c Coleridge.*

*d Roberts.*

"Habitual evils change not on a sudden, but many days must pass and many sorrows; conscious remorse and anguish must be felt, to curb desire, to break the stubborn will, and work a second nature in the soul, ere virtue can resume the place she lost."—*Rowe.*

"This law is the magistrate of a man's life. It is not the pilot directing the vessel: it is the vessel abandoned to the force of the current, the influence of the tides and the control of the winds."—*Joseph Johnson.*

*e Stowell.*

of knowledge; 2. The force of passions; 3. Susceptibility to influence. II. The sins of youth descend to age. This is secured by—1. The law of retribution; 2. The law of habit; 3. The law of memory. III. Their existence in age is a bitter thing—1. To the body; 2. To the soul, intellect, heart, conscience. IV. They are a bitter thing in old age, even where the sufferer is a holy man. Learn the importance of beginning religion in youth.[b]

*Influence of past habits* (*v.* 26).—Late observations have shown, that under many circumstances the magnetic needle, even after the disturbing influence has been removed, will continue wavering, and require many days before it points aright, and remains steady to the pole. So is it ordinarily with the soul, after it has begun to force itself from the disturbing forces of the flesh and of the world.[c]—*Stocks* (*v.* 27).—The punishment of the stocks has been common in the East from the most remote antiquity, as is seen in all their records. But whether the stocks were formerly like clogs, or as those of the present day, it is impossible to say. Those now in use differ from those in England, as the unfortunate culprit has to lie with his back on the ground, having his feet fast in one pair, and his hands in another. Thus, all he can do is to writhe his body; his arms and legs being so fast, that he cannot possibly move them. A man placed in great difficulty, says, "Alas! I am now in the stocks." "I have put my boy in the *tulungu*," *i.e.* stocks; which means he is confined, or sent to school. To a young man of roving habits, it is said, "You must have your feet in the stocks," *i.e.* get married. "Alas! alas! I am now in the stocks; the guards are around my path, and a seal is put upon my feet."[d]—*Habits are habitual acts.*—As habits belonging to the body are produced by external acts, so habits of the mind are produced by the exertion of inward practical principles—that is by carrying them into act, or acting upon them, the principles of obedience, of veracity, justice, and charity. . . . Resolutions to do well are properly acts. . . . All these, therefore, may and will contribute towards forming good habits. But going over the theory of virtue in one's thoughts, talking well, and drawing fine pictures of it, this is so far from necessarily or certainly conducing to form a habit of it in him who thus employs himself, that it may harden the mind in a contrary course, and render it gradually more insensible—that is, form a habit of insensibility to all moral considerations. For, from our very faculty of habits, passive impressions by being repeated grow weaker. Thoughts, by often passing through the mind, are felt less sensibly: being accustomed to danger begets intrepidity—that is, lessens fear; to distress lessens the passion of pity; to instances of others' mortality, lessens the sensible apprehension of our own. And from these two observations together, that practical habits are formed and strengthened by repeated acts, and that passive impressions grow weaker by being repeated upon us, it must follow, that active habits may be gradually forming and strengthening, by a course of acting upon such and such motives and excitements, while these motives and excitements themselves are, by proportionable degrees, growing less sensible—that is, are continually less and less sensibly felt, even as the active habits strengthen. . . . Active habits are to be formed by exercise.[e]

## CHAPTER THE FOURTEENTH.

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**1 3.** (1) **man . . days,** true of the longest life. **and . . trouble,**[a] *i.e.* his short life is full of trouble. (2) **cometh . . flower,** beautiful and full of promise. **and . . down,** by the ills of life, or by death; as a flower by the wind. **fleeth . . shadow,**[b] swift, noiseless. **and . . not,** leaves no trace. (3) **doss . . one,**[c] as man, so weak and worthless. **and . . thee,** thy inferior in all things.

*The fragility of human life.*—I. The important ideas suggested by the text. Life is—1. Flattering in its commencement; 2. Disastrous in its continuance; 3. Contracted in its span; 4. Incessant in its course; 5. Eventful in its issue. II. Improve them by practical inferences. It is the duty of wisdom and piety —1. To enrich the juvenile mind with religious instruction; 2. To improve the dispensations of Providence; 3. To be diligent; 4. To maintain a noble detachment from the world; 5. To live in a constant readiness for your change. Apply—(1) To the young; (2) To those who have escaped the dangers of infancy; (3) To the aged.

*Man proposes, God disposes.*—The wild fellow in Petronius that escaped upon a broken table from the furies of a shipwreck, as he was sunning himself upon the rocky shore, espied a man rolled upon his floating bed of waves, ballasted with sand in the folds of his garments, and carried by his civil enemy the sea towards the shore to find a grave: and it cast him into some sad thoughts that peradventure this man's wife, in some part of the continent, safe and warm, looks next month for the good man's return; or it may be his son knows nothing of the tempest; or his father thinks of that affectionate kiss which still is warm upon the good old man's cheek ever since he took a kind farewell, and he weeps with joy to think how blessed he shall be when his beloved boy returns into the circle of his father's arms. These are the thoughts of mortals, this the end and sum of all their designs: a dark night and an ill guide, a boisterous sea and a broken cable, a hard rock and a rough wind, dashed in pieces the fortune of a whole family, and they that shall weep loudest for the accident, are not yet entered into the storm, and yet have suffered shipwreck. Then looking upon the carcase he knew it, and found it to be the master of the ship, who the day before cast up the accounts of his patrimony and his trade, and named the day when he thought to be at home. See how the man swims who was so angry two days since: his passions are becalmed by the storm, his accounts cast up, his cares at an end, his voyage done, and his gains are the strange events of death; which, whether they be good or evil, the men that are alive, seldom trouble themselves concerning the interest of the dead.[d]

**4—6.** (4) **who . . unclean?**[a] a proverb: recognising the fact of original sin. (5) **seeing . . determined,**[b] as they are fixed he cannot pass the bounds of his allotted time. (6) **accomplish,** fill up the little time that is given to him. **hireling,** who works no longer than the appointed time.

*Citations* (*v.* 5).—I. Body. II. Culture. III. Character. IV. Races. V. Destiny. VI. Life.[c]

**the life of man is brief and sorrowful**

*a* Ecc. ii. 23.

*b* 1 Ch. xxix. 15.

*c* Ps. cxliii. 2.

*v.* 1. *Dr. J. Edwards Theol.* iii. 450; *G. J. Zollikoffer*, ii. 571; *Dr. S. Johnson*, ii. 19.

*vv.* 1, 2. *L. Sterne*, ii. 53; *J. Adams*, 296; *W. Adey*, 152; *J. Grose*, vi. 141; *G. Goldie*, 45; *J. Yonge*, ii. 241; *F. E. Paget*, 141; *J. Cawood*, i. 190.

*v.* 2. *T. Dorrington*, i. 192.

*vv.* 3, 4. *J. Seed*, ii. 331.

*Afflictions of the good.* — Joseph (Ge. xxxix. 20—23; Ps. ciii. 17—19). Moses (He. xi. 23). Eli (1 Sa. iii. 18) Neh. (i. 4). Job (i. 20—22). David (2 Sa. xii 15—23). Paul (Ac. xx. 22—24. xxi. 13). Apostles (1 Co. iv. 13; 2 Co. vi. 4—10).

One thing acquired with pain is better than a hundred acquired with ease.

*d Jeremy Taylor.*

**the length of life is fixed by God**

*a* Jc. xiii. 23; Lu. i. 35.

*b* Ac. xvii. 26 Lu. xii. 20.

*c W. W. Wythe.*

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*The bills of mortality.*—In the most healthful times, two hundred and upwards was the constant weekly tribute paid to mortality in London. A large bill, but it must be discharged. Can one city spend according to this weekly rate and not be bankrupt of people? At leastwise, must not my shot be cast for to make up this reckoning? When only seven young men and those chosen by lot, were but yearly taken out of Athens to be devoured by the monster Minotaur, the whole city was in a constant fright, children for themselves, and parents for their children. Yea, their escaping of the first was but an introduction to the next year's lottery. Were the dwellers and lodgers in London weekly to cast lots who should make up this two hundred, how would every one be affrighted! Now none regard it. My security concludes the aforesaid number will amount of infants and old folk. Few men of the middle age, and amongst them surely not myself. But oh! is not this putting the evil day far from me, the ready way to bring it the nearest to me? The lot is weekly drawn (though not by me) for me, I am, therefore, concerned seriously to provide, lest that death's prize prove my blank.[d]

**7—10.** (7) **hope . . tree,**[a] but not of man. (8) **though . . earth,** *etc.*, and seem to have perished. (9) **scent,** *lit.* breath exhalation. **bud,** germinate. (10) **but . . away,**[b] perishes. **man . . ghost,** expires, dies.

*Death.*—"Where is he"—I. As to any opportunity of serving God? II. As to any means of benefiting his own soul? III. As to any hope of carrying into effect his purposes and resolutions? IV. As to any possibility of preparing for his eternal state? Let me then ask—1. If the time were come for us to give up the ghost, where should we be? 2. As the time for your giving up the ghost will shortly come, where should you now be?[c]—*The death of man.*—I. On the supposition that he was a good man, then—1. He is where he has long desired to be; 2. Where he was prepared to be; 3. Where he will for ever remain. II. On the supposition that he was a bad man—1. He is where he never desired to be; 2. Where he was prepared to be; 3. Where he can never wish to remain.[d]

*The scent of water.*—The word translated "scent" might, with more aptitude for the present occasion, be rendered steam, or vapour; that is moisture combined with a certain portion of heat. Nor is there any abuse of language in calling the exhalation which arises from a river at noon, and the odorous effluvium which is thrown from a plant into the air, by the same name; for in many cases a degree of moisture is mixed with the scented particles. This appears to be the reason why many flowers smell most in the evening, and others only during those hours. We should not be far from the truth in saying that the little fragrant atoms are conveyed to the senses as they float upon the wings of an invisible steam or vapour. The watery aliment which plants absorb in the shape of vapour is shown by many observations to be of the highest importance to their well-being; gardeners, aware of this fact, keep not only the foliage, but the floors of their stoves and hot-houses constantly moist. In hot countries, travellers often observe the most succulent plants thriving with every apparent comfort upon the most arid and sunburnt soil. In the parched desert of Africa, where the

v. 4. *A. Burgess, Orig. Sin.* i. 48; *J. C. Knowles*, 105; *J. C. Lloyd*, 153.

"The following are common sayings:—'Who can turn a black crow into a white crane?' 'Who can make the bitter fruit sweet?' 'Who can make straight the tail of the dog?' 'If you give the serpent sweet things, will his pois n depart?'" —*Roberts.*

*d T. Fuller.*

comparison of the end of a tree and of a man

*a* Jo. xii. 24; 1 Co. xv. 36.

*b* Lu. xvi. 22, 23.

*c C. Simeon, M.A.*

*d Ad Clerum.*

v. 10. *T. Belsham*, i. 439; *J. Styles*, i. 17; *H. Gauntlett*, i. 136.

v. 7. "Trees here appear to be more tenacious of life than in England. Those trees, also, which have actually been cut down, after a few showers soon begin to send forth the 'tender branch.' The plantain-tree, after it has borne fruit once, is cut down; but from its roots another springs up, which, in its turn, also gives fruit, and is then cut down, to make way for another. Thus, in reference to this tree, it may be truly said, Cut it down, but the tender

quantity of rain in a century scarcely rises to the height of an inch, the most juicy vegetables are often found growing to an astonishing height. This scent of water, as our version has it, is constantly floating in the atmosphere, and is thus everywhere ready to allay the thirst of the weary plants; and which, whether it be condensed into showers and dew, or whether it glides unseen in the form of transparent vapour, ministers without partiality to the wants of the meanest plant that buds in the desert, and the cedar that rears its stately crown in the midst of the forest. To enable the leaves thus to drink up the "scent of water," their surfaces are covered with a countless number of minute slits, which offer a free passage into the cellular substance. Through these apertures the subtle tide of vapour ebbs and flows according as the plant is in need, or has a superabundance, of moisture.[e]

**11, 12.** (11) **as . . fail,** by evaporation. **sea,** or large body of water, as lake or river.[a] **flood,** river. (12) **so . . down,** in the grave. **and . . not,** to his former state. **till . . more,**[b] *i.e.* never.[c]

*The resurrection of the body.*—I. The body of the resurrection will be as strictly identical with the body of death, as the body of death is with the body of birth. II. Each soul will have an indubitable intuitive consciousness that its new body is identical with the old. III. Each friend will recognise the individual characteristics of the soul in the perfectly transparent expression of the new body.[d]

*Till the heavens are no more.*—"Man," says the inspired writer, "riseth not till the heavens be no more:" at the grand consummation of all things, when the present aerial heavens disappear, he shall be reunited to the body in which he once dwelt, in anticipation of the fuller announcement of this in the Gospel age. It is obvious that the destruction of the enemies of Israel by great stones from heaven, recorded in Joshua x. 11, was by their descent from the atmosphere above, not from heaven proper. So also came the "fire from heaven" spoken of in divers passages. This "heaven" was spanned by the hand of God (Isa. xlviii. 13), its "pillars" tremble at His reproof (Job xxvi. 11), yet His glory rises above and far excels these His works, marvellous as they are (Psa. ix. 1).

*Doubt of the resurrection removed.*—I am about to relate to you one of the strong emotions of my life. I found myself in the crypt of a church at Palermo. My friends and I had gone down into it without exactly knowing where we went, and walked with more of surprise than terror between a double line of skeletons. And yet the spectacle was ghastly enough. Those perpendicular dead bodies, dressed in brown garments that hung loosely around their bony limbs, with crossed hands, holding some sort of shield, with their names written on it, had fallen into dislocated attitudes, even more grotesque than horrible. The portals of our Gothic church cathedrals have no representations that equal this. And yet we were not conscious of any terror. Death presented us, indeed, with his material aspect, his sad, repulsive aspect, but the likeness of humanity was still there. With one word, we felt God could call those dry bones to life again. The next chamber had a more appalling spectacle in reserve. All along the walls—as in the cabin of some great ship—were ranged berths of equal lengths, and on these, dressed

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branch thereof will not cease.'" —*Roberts.*

"I might say much of the commodities Death can sell a man; but, briefly, Death is a friend of ours; and he that is not ready to entertain him is not at home."—*Lord Bacon. e Visitor.*

**life compared with failing waters**

*a Nile,* Is. xix. 5; *Euphrates,* Is. xxvii. 1. See also 2 K. xxv.

*b* Is. li. 6; 2 Pe. iii.7—10; Is. lxv. 17; Re. xx. 11; Jo. xi 25; 1 Th. iv. 14—16.

*c* "Job's idea of a future state not to be gathered from this text." —*Barnes.*

*d A. A. Hodge.*

"We shall have bodies after the resurrection, for 'all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of Man, and shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation.' Our bodies will, of course, be of a less spiritual nature than the soul, otherwise two souls will be conjoined in one person. We naturally suppose that the object of the body will be to release the soul to an external world; as

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glass, in the telescope, through a grosser object than the eye, helps vision, so the body will aid the soul hereafter, as here." This we all admit."—*N. Adams.* It is said of Cleombrotus, a heathen, that, after reading the discourses of Plato upon the immortality of the soul, he cast himself headlong from a high rock, and brake his neck, that he might enter upon that immortality which he loved, and believed would follow after death. *e Mad. de Gasparin.*

**death a great change**

*a* "Job has no hope on earth; he longs for the grave, as the gate to a resurrection in another world."—*Bp. Wordsworth. Barnes* thinks the word here rendered grave should be taken to mean the place of departed spirits.

*b* Ac. xxvi. 8; Ez. xxxvii. 3—10; Jo. v. 28, 29; Re. xx. 12, 13.

*c* La. iii. 25, 26; Ja. v. 7, 8.

*d C. Simeon.*

*v.* 13. *Dr. J. Langhorne*, i. 165.

*vv.* 13—15. *Dr. Watts*, vii. 227.

*v.* 14. *Abp. Sandys*, 161, 463; *R. Meggott*, 277; *J. Boyse*, i. 31; *Bp. Beveridge*, vii. 276; *W. Shoreu*, 177; *T. Wheat an*, 385; *W. Adey*, 64; *Dr. Cobden*, 429; *Bp.*

in gorgeous attire, hands gloved, lay corpses of women, with discoloured faces, empty eye-sockets, sunken features, hollow mouths, and wreaths of roses upon their heads. There were hundreds upon hundreds of them, in all the pomp of their court dresses, and a nauseating smell, the cold, faint smell of death, rose from the vaults where the bodies were drying. In the presence of these faces, with their beauty so inexorably destroyed, of this ghastly satire on worldly vanities, I felt my blood congeal. But when at the end of the passage, lit by our guide's torch, a well yawned before us, and he lowered the red and smoking light he held to show it better; when I saw that nameless *detritus*, damp, pestilential, which overflowed the well's mouth, and when our guide said, "This is the dust of those yonder; when they have lain their time, we throw them in here," I remained almost lifeless with horror. With my hand half plunged in those ashes, looking at what they had left on my fingers, a despairing doubt flashed blightingly across my soul. As I fled in haste from that fatal crypt, and mounted with unsteady step the stair that led us back into the nave, just where the daylight began to appear, I suddenly saw four letters carved on the wall, I.N.R.I. Then a voice resounded very near, "Believest thou that I am able to do this?" Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews, yea verily, Thou wilt do it! From that day I have never for a moment doubted of the resurrection of the dead.*e*

**13, 14.** (13) **O . . grave,***a see on* iii. 11. **keep . . secret,** watch over my dust. **until . . past,** wh. now rages like a tempest. **that . . time,** for my restoration. (14) **if . . again,***b* Job begins now to think that there is another life. **days . . time,** warfare,*c* hard service. **till . . come,** of the precise nature of wh. change he is ignorant.

*The change that takes place at death.*—I. What is that change that awaits us all? It is—1. Great; 2. Momentous; 3. Permanent. II. Let us consider our duty in reference to it. To wait in a state of—1. Patient expectation; 2. Of diligent preparation. Let the subject teach us—(1) The folly of ambition; (2) The wisdom of true piety.*d*—*The great change.*—I. Man's time in this world is an appointed time. 1. Concerning this time, it is continually passing, a time of sojourning, the accepted time; 2. By whom man's time is appointed: it is in the hand and power of none but God; 3. To what end it is appointed: for seeking, for making peace, for conversion and healing, to render final impenitence inexcusable. II. A change will come and put an end to this time. 1. In what respects death may be called a change; 2. That death will certainly come; 3. That time comes to an end when death comes. III. To be waiting for this change is the practice of the saints, and should be the wisdom of all.—*Nathaniel Vincent.*—*Waiting for death.*—I. Death is a change—1. Of place; 2. Of condition; 3. Of opinions; 4. Of company. II. How we should wait for it. With—1. Patience; 2. Hopefulness; 3. Readiness.—*W. W. Whyte.*—*The last change.*—I. It might have been an unwelcome change. II. It will be a great change. III. It may be a sudden change. IV. It is likely to be an unattended change. V. It must be a final change.

*The soul; its existence apart from the body.*—We once heard a minister trying to teach some children that the soul would live

after they were all dead. They listened, but evidently did not understand. He was too abstract. Snatching his watch from his pocket, he said, "James, what is that I hold in my hand?" "A watch, sir!" "A little clock!" says another. "Do you see it?" "Yes, sir." How do you know it is a watch?" "Because it ticks, sir." "Very well, can any of you hear it tick? All of you listen now." After a pause, "Yes, sir, we hear it." He then took off the case, and held the case in one hand and the watch in the other. "Now, children, which is the watch? you see there are two which look like watches." "The little one in your right hand, sir." "Very well, again. Now I will take the case, and put it away down here in my hat. Now, let us see if you can hear the watch ticking?" "Yes, sir, we hear it!" exclaimed several voices. "Well, the watch can tick, and go, and keep time, you see, when the case is taken off, and put in my hat. The watch goes just as well. So it is with you, children. Your body is nothing but the case—the body may be taken off and buried in the ground, but the soul will live and think, just as this watch will go, as you see, when the case is taken off."[e]—*Reasons against the resurrection.*—First it is alleged that the resurrection of bodies resolved to dust and ashes is against common sense and reason. Ans.—It is above reason, but not against reason. For impotent and miserable man, as experience showeth, can, by art, even of ashes make the curious workmanship of glass; why then may we not in reason think, that the omnipotent and everlasting God is able to raise men's bodies out of the dust? Secondly, it is said that men's bodies being dead are turned into dust, and so are mingled with the bodies of beasts and other creatures, and one man's body with another, and that by reason of this confusion men cannot possibly rise with their own bodies. Ans.—Howsoever this is impossible with men, yet it is possible with God. For He that in the beginning was able to create all things of nothing, is much more able to make every man's body at the resurrection of his own matter, and to distinguish the dust of men's bodies from the dust of beasts; and the dust of one man's body from another. The goldsmith by his art can sunder divers metals one from another, and some men out of one metal can draw another, why then should we think it impossible for the Almighty to do the like? It may be further objected thus: a man is eaten by a wolf, the wolf is eaten by a lion, the lion by the fowls of the air, and the fowls of the air eaten again by men; again, one man is eaten of another as it is usual among cannibals. Now, the body of that man which is turned into so many substances, especially into the body of another man, cannot rise again; and if the one doth, the other doth not. Ans.—This reason is but a cavil of man's brain; for we must not think that whatsoever entereth into the body, and is turned into the substance thereof, must rise again, and become a part of the body at the resurrection; but every man shall then have so much substance of his own as shall make his body to be entire and perfect; though another man's flesh once eaten be no part thereof. Again, it is urged that because flesh and blood cannot enter into the kingdom of God, therefore the bodies of men shall not rise again. Ans.—By flesh and blood it is not meant the bodies of men simply, but the bodies of men as they are in weakness, without glory, subject to corruption. For

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*Ravenscroft*, ii. 551; *J. C. Galloway*, 271; *G. Mathew*, i. 313; *J. Garnons*, i. 233; *T. F. Dibden*, 425. Mr. Rubey, of Portsea, who for many years was a consistent member of the church, then under the pastoral care of the Rev. Mr. Dunn, having at his usual time retired to his chamber for private devotion, was found dead on his knees.

[e] *Dr. J. Todd.*

"There is nothing strictly immortal but immortality. Whatever hath no beginning may be confident of no end—which is the peculiarity of that necessary essence that cannot destroy itself — and the highest strain of omnipotency, to be so powerfully constituted as not to suffer even from the power of itself: all others have a dependent being, and within the reach of destruction." — *Sir T. Browne.*

"Bonaparte was visiting the picture gallery of Soult with Dénon, and was struck with one of Raffaelle's pictures, which Dénon complimented with the term 'immortal.' 'How long may it last?' asked Bonaparte. 'Well, some four or five hundred years longer,' said Dénon. 'Belle immortalité!' said Bonaparte, disdain-

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fully." — *Lady Morgan.*
*f W. Perkins.*

**our steps numbered, and sin watched**

*a* Ps. cxxxviii. 8; Phi. i. 6.

*b* Ps. cxxxix. 1—3; Je. xvi. 17; Pr. v. 21.

*c Ewald, Dillmann.*

*v.* 15. *T. Cheminais*, i. 175.

"The path of sorrow, and that path alone, leads to the land where sorrow is unknown; no traveller ever reached that blest abode, who found not thorns and briers in his road."—*Cowper.*

*d Chapman.*

**transgressions sealed**

*a* Ho. xiii. 12; De. xxxii. 33—35.

*b* Re. vi. 14.

*c U. R. Thomas.*

*d Dr. Thomas.*

*v.* 19. "Is a man found fault with because he makes slow progress in his undertaking, he says, 'Never mind; the water which runs so softly, will, in time, wear away the stones.'" — *Roberts.*

"Hope is like the sun, which, as we journey towards it, casts the shadow of our burden behind us."—*Samuel Smiles, LL.D.*

*e Harmer.*

flesh and blood in Scripture signifies sometimes the original sin and corruption of nature, and sometimes man's nature subject to miseries and infirmities, or the body in corruption before it be glorified, and so it must be understood in this place.[f]

**15, 16.** (15) **thou . . thee,**[a] faith that the voice of the living God would penetrate the region of the dead. **thou . . hands,** though departed fr. this life, he would not be forgotten. (16) **now . . steps,**[b] the present diligent oversight a pledge of the future. **dost . . sin,** or, acc. to some,[c] "wilt thou not pass over (and forgive) my sin?"

*God sees everything.*—The master of three drunken and thievish slaves, having observed a great change in their conduct, asked its cause. One of them replied, "Massa, God Almighty in top!" (above). He was answered. "Was not God Almighty in top when you got drunk, and robbed me?" "Yes, massa; but we not know then." He then asked them how they came to know. They answered, "Massa, we been gone a chapel, and preacher tell we so; and now we 'fraid to get drunk, and rob, like fore time. God will see, and He will be angry: Him see ebery thing."

*Omniscience of God.*

Though all the doors are sure, and all our servants
As sure bound with their sleep, yet there is One
That wakes above, whose eye no sleep can bind.
He sees through doors, and darkness, and our thoughts;
And therefore, as we should avoid with fear,
To think amiss ourselves before His search,
So should we be as curious to shun
All cause, that others think not ill of us.[d]

**17—19.** (17) **my . . bag,**[a] counted, hoarded up, so that there can be no diminution or loss when the day of settlement comes. **sewest,** one sewn to another. (18) **mountain . . nought,** *etc.*,[b] the most solid of earthly things are movable, why should man hope to be exempt fr. the law of change? (19) **waters,** *etc.*, same idea is here illus. by small things, as in *v.* 18 by great.

*God's perfect remembrance of our sins and our sorrows.*—To be taken in connection with Psa. lvi. 8.—This fact implies—I. God's intimate acquaintance with us. II. God's great care of us.[c]—*The wear, tear, and dissolution of the world.*—The speaker seems to have been impressed with this law as it acted in the two great departments of life. I. The mental. II. The corporeal. The subject teaches the unwisdom of worldliness, and—III. The value of Christianity.[d]

*Sealed in a bag.*—The money that is collected together in the treasuries of Eastern princes is told up in certain equal sums, put into bags, and sealed.—*Chardin.*—These are what in some parts of the Levant are called purses, where they reckon great expenses by so many purses. The money collected in the temple in the time of Joash, for its reparation, seems, in like manner, to have been told up in bags of equal value to each other, and probably delivered sealed to those who paid the workmen (2 Kings xii. 10). If Job alludes to this custom, it should seem that he considered his offences as reckoned by God to be very numerous, as well as not suffered to be lost in inattention, since they are only considerable sums which are thus kept.[e]

20–22. (20) **thou**, the God of nature, and all power. **him**, poor weak man. **passeth**, he is dissolved away. **thou . . countenance**, by disease and time; all. to change of death. **and . . away**, fr. presence of living. (21) **his sons**, *etc.*,[a] having passed away, he is unaffected by the honours or disgraces of his posterity. (22) **flesh . . pain**,[b] while he lives he is sure of only this one thing. **mourn**, over his pain, and his sin.

*Lessons to be learned from the speech of Job.*—I. The comparative insignificance of worldly prosperity or adversity in view of the eternal world. II. The infinite importance of securing a place of happiness beyond the grave—1. For ourselves; 2. For our children and friends. III. The value of the Gospel, and the duty of making ourselves acquainted with its precious contents. IV. The paramount necessity of a personal interest in Him who is "the way, the truth, and the life."[c]

*Death always near.*—"My ancestors," said a sailor, "were all seamen, and all of them died at sea: my father, my grandfather, and my great-grandfather, were all buried in the sea." Then said a citizen, "What great cause have you then, when you set out to sea, to remember your death! and to commit your soul to the hands of God!" "Yea, but," said the mariner to the citizen, "where, I pray, did your father and your grandfather die?" "Why," said he, "they died all of them in their beds." "Truly, then," said the mariner, "what a care had you need to have every night, when you go to bed, to think of your bed as the grave, and the clothes that cover you as the earth that must one day be thrown upon you! for the very heathens themselves that implored as many deities as they conceived chimeras in their fancies, yet were never known to erect an altar to Death, because that was ever held uncertain and implacable."[d]

*Death answers many a prayer.*—

The dew is on the summer's greenest grass,
Through which the modest daisy blushing peeps;
The gentle wind that like a ghost doth pass,
A waving shadow on the corn-field keeps;
But I, who love them all, shall never be
Again among the woods, or on the moorland lea!

The sun shines sweetly—sweeter may it shine!—
Bless'd is the brightness of a summer day;
It cheers lone hearts; and why should I repine,
Although among green fields I cannot stray!
Woods! I have grown, since last I heard you wave
Familiar with death, and neighbour to the grave!

These words have shaken mighty human souls—
Like a sepulchre's echo drear they sound—
E'en as the owl's wild whoop at midnight rolls
The ivied remnants of old ruins round.
Yet wherefore tremble! Can the soul decay?
Or that which thinks and feels, in aught e'er fade away?

Are there not aspirations in each heart
After a better, brighter world than this?
Longings for being nobler in each part—
Things more exalted—steep'd in deeper bliss?
Who gave us these? What are they? Soul, in thee
The bud is budding now for immortality!

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**the end of human life**

*a* Ps. xxxix. 6.

*b* Or, "his flesh shall drop away from him." — *Good.*

*v.* 22. *C. J. Furlong*, 179.

*c Dr. Robinson.*

"'Paid the debt of nature.' No: it is not paying a debt: it is rather like bringing a note to a bank to obtain solid gold in exchange for it. In this case, you bring this cumbrous body, which is nothing worth, and which you could not wish to retain long: you lay it down, and receive for it, from the eternal treasures, liberty, victory, knowledge, rapture."—*J. Foster.*

*d Spencer.*

"We know, O Lord, that our rent due to Thee is our soul, and the day of our death is the day, and our death-bed the place, where this rent is to be paid. And we know, too, that he that hath sold his soul for unjust gain, or given away his soul before in society and fellowship of sin, or lent away his soul for a time by a lukewarmness and temporising to the dishonour of Thy name, to the weakness of Thy cause, to the discouraging of Thy servants, he comes to that day and to that place, his death and death-bed

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Death comes to take me where I long to be ;
One pang, and brightly blooms the immortal flower ;
Death comes to lead me from mortality,
To lands which know not one unhappy hour ;
I have a hope, a faith—from sorrow here
I'm led by death away—why should I start and fear ?

A change from woe to joy—from earth to heaven—
Death gives me this—it leads me calmly where
The souls that long ago from mine were riven
May meet again ! Death answers many a prayer.
Bright day, shine on ! be glad : days brighter far
Are stretch'd before my eyes than those of mortals are !*

## *CHAPTER THE FIFTEENTH.*

**the answer of Eliphaz**

**unprofitable talk**

**1—3.** (1) **answered,** here begins the second colloquy betw. Job and his friends. (2) **wise man,** such as you profess to be. **vain knowledge,**[a] *Heb.* knowledge of wind. **belly,** seat of thought and desire. **east wind,** withering, parching,[b] and violent.[c] (3) **should . . talk?** words to no purpose.

*The egotistic talker.*—Almost every circle is blessed with the egotist, who exercises a kind of dictatorship over it. Are you in a mistake as to a matter of fact? He cannot suffer you to proceed till you are corrected. Have you a word on the end of your tongue? He at once comes to your relief. Do you talk bad grammar? He quotes rules and gives examples like a pedagogue. Does he discover that there is a link wanting in the chain of your argument? He bids you stay till he has supplied it. Do you drop a word to which he has devoted much research? He asks you whether you know its primitive signification, and straightway inflicts upon the circle a long philological disquisition. When you relate an incident which you suppose new and affecting, your friend listens without emotion. When you have done, he observes that he heard the same long ago, and adds a very material circumstance which you omitted. He is never taken by surprise, and it is impossible to give him any information. And yet he never takes the lead in conversation, nor advances an original thought. It is his business to come after, and pick up the words which others let slip in a running talk, or to check their impetuosity, that he may point out to them their missteps. Had he lived in the days of Solomon, he would have flattered the royal sage with an intimation that some of his proverbs were but plagiarisms ; or, had he been a contemporary of Solomon's father, would have felt himself bound to give the slayer of Goliath some lessons on the use of the sling, and hinted to the sweet singer of Israel his private opinion, that the shepherd bard did not perfectly understand the use of the harp.[d]

**self-condemnation**

**4—6.** (4) **prayer,**[a] rather, devout meditation. (5) **uttereth,** *i.e.* teacheth. **chooseth . . crafty,** instead of teachings of wisdom. (6) **thine . . thee,** by the sentiments thou dost utter.

*Christian speech.*—Observe—I. That the interests of religion are greatly in the keeping of its professors. II. That a believer in trouble should be careful, so to speak, as to bear a good testimony to religion before the world.[b]

without any rent in his hand, without any soul, to this purpose, to surrender it unto Thee."—*Dr. Donne.*

"To live in hearts we leave behind, is not to die."—*Campbell.*

* *Robert Nicol.*

a Mat. xii. 36, 37.

b Ex. xiv. 21 ; Is. xxvii. 8 ; Jo. iv. 8.

c Ps. xlviii. 7.

"The wise man can never be without pleasure in himself, nor can anything out of himself molest and trouble him. Nor is this a happiness to be attained to but by long accustomance, and by doing by our mind just as we do by our bodies in time of pestilence, that is, by carefully avoiding all commerce with those that are sick."—*Flecknoe.*

d *G. W. Harvey.*

a Lu. xviii. 1 ; Ja. iv. 2.

b *Dr. Robinson.* v. 4. *R. P. Buddicom.* 1 (1826) ; *J. Foster. Lec.* I, 81 ; and also see *F.*

*Dogmatical talking.*—

When men of judgment creep and feel their way,
The positive pronounce without dismay;
Their want of light and intellect supplied
By sparks absurdity strikes out of pride.
Without the means of knowing right from wrong,
They always are decisive, clear and strong;
Where others toil with philosophic force,
Their nimble nonsense takes a shorter course;
Flings at your head conviction in the lump,
And gains remote conclusions at a jump:
Their own defect, invisible to them,
Seen in another, they at once condemn;
And, though self-idolised in every case,
Hate their own likeness in a brother's face.
The cause is plain and not to be denied,
The proud are always most provoked by pride;
Few competitions but engender spite;
And those the most where neither has a right.[c]

**7—10.** (7) **art . . born?** sug. of old belief in the original wisdom of Adam; or, hast thou lived fr. the creation and treasured up all the wisdom since? (8) **hast . . God?**[a] or "wast thou present as a hearer in the counsel of Eloah?"[b] **restrain . . thyself?** hast thou a monopoly of wisdom? (9) **what . . not?** by wh. exceptional knowledge, or means of knowing, thy superior wisdom may be proved. (10) **with us,** *etc.*, we are speaking the experience of ancient sages.

*Provision for happiness in old age.*—It is not for youth alone that the great Parent of creation hath provided. Happiness is found with the purring cat no less than with the playful kitten; in the arm-chair of dozing age, as well as in either the sprightliness of the dance, or the animation of the chase. To novelty, to acuteness of sensation, to hope, to ardour of pursuit, succeeds what is, in no inconsiderable degree, an equivalent for them all, "perception of ease." Herein is the exact difference between the young and the old. The young are not happy but when enjoying pleasure; the old are happy when free from pain. And this constitution suits with the degrees of animal power which they respectively possess. The vigour of youth was to be stimulated to action by impatience of rest: whilst to the imbecility of age, quietness and repose become positive gratifications. In one important respect the advantage is with the old. A state of ease is, generally speaking, more attainable than a state of pleasure. A constitution, therefore, which can enjoy ease is preferable to that which can taste only pleasure. This same perception of ease oftentimes renders old age a condition of great comfort, especially when riding at its anchor after a busy or tempestuous life. It is well ascribed by Rousseau to the interval of repose and enjoyment between the hurry and the end of life. How far the same cause extends to other animal natures cannot be judged of with certainty. The appearance of satisfaction with which most animals, as their activity subsides, seek and enjoy rest, affords reason to believe that this source of gratification is appointed to advanced life, under all, or most, of its various forms.[c]

**11—13.** (11) **consolations,**[a] assurances of restoration, etc.,

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*Jacox in Homilist, Eds. Ser.* iii. 222.

"The pure and noble, the graceful and dignified simplicity of language, is nowhere in such perfection as in the Scriptures and Homer. The whole Book of Job, with regard both to sublimity of thought and morality, exceeds, beyond all comparison, the most noble parts of Homer."—*A. Pope.*

*c Cowper.*

**let the past teach**

*a* De. xxix. 29; Ro. xi 34; 1 Co. ii. 11, 26; Pr. iii. 32.

*b Spk. Com.*

"When a majority of people agree on any subject, should an individual pertinaciously oppose them, it will be asked, 'What! were you born before all others?' 'Yes, yes; he is the first man; no wonder he has so much wisdom! 'Sa'am to the *first!* man.'"—*Roberts.*

"Hope is a prodigal young heir, and Experience is his banker; but his drafts are seldom honoured, since there is often a heavy balance against him, because he draws largely on a small capital, is not yet in possession, and if he were, would die."—*C. Colton.*

*c Paley.*

**there must**

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**be a reason for turning from God**

*a* 2 Co. i. 3—5.

*b* Pr. x. 10.

*v.* 11. *D. Wilcox*, i. 214; *Beddome*, 6; *R. A. Suckling*, 261; *A. B. Evans*, 97.

*c Spencer.* "It is when our budding hopes are nipped beyond recovery by some rough wind, that we are the most disposed to picture to ourselves what flowers they might have borne, if they had flourished." —*Dickens.*

**the holiness of God**

*a* Pr. xx. 9; Ec. vii. 20.

*b* Pr. xix. 28; Ps. xiv. 1—3; Ro. i. 28—32, iii. 9—19.

*v.* 14. *C. F. Fenwick*, 95; *E. Beeston*, 41.

*c Dr. Robinson.*

*vv.* 14—16. *J. Fawcett*, ii. 73.

*v.* 16. *Ant. Burgess, Orig. Sin*, Pt. 4, 437.

*d Hodge.*

**appeal to antiquity**

*a* "I will give you the result of the observations of the *golden age* of the world, and it could not be pretended that they had been corrupted by foreign philosophy; and when in morals and in sentiment they were pure."—*Barnes.*

*b* "Eliphaz here

conditional on thy repentance. **is . . thee?** *lit.* and the word spoken kindly to thee. (12) **why . . away?** why allow yourself to be controlled by feeling? **wink,**[b] or roll in pride, contempt. (13) **spirit,** anger, wrath.

*Example of consolation.*—St. Chrysostom, suffering under the Empress Eudoxia, tells his friend Cyricus, how he armed himself beforehand. "I thought," said he, "will she banish me? 'The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof.' Take away my goods? Naked came I into the world, and naked must I return. Will she stone me? I remembered Stephen. Behead me? John the Baptist came into my mind."[c]—*Consolation for a mother.*—Dr. Payson, visiting a mother who was disconsolate for the loss of a child, said, "Suppose, now, some one was making a beautiful crown for you to wear, and you knew it was for you, and that you were to receive it and wear it as soon as it should be done. Now, if the maker of it were to come, and, in order to make the crown more beautiful and splendid, were to take some of *your jewels* to put into it, should you be sorrowful and unhappy because they were taken away for a little while, when you knew they were gone to make up your crown?"

**14—16.** (14) **what . . clean?**[a] regarded and spoken of as righteous? **he . . woman,** *i.e.* man. (15) **saints,** servants, *i.e.* the angels. **heavens,** all places and beings impure and imperfect, by comparison, in view of a holy God. (16) **how . . man,** as comp. with angels. **which . . water?**[b] sins as naturally as, when thirsty, he drinks water.

*Drinking down sin.*—A contrast and a resemblance. I. Water a creature of God, sin a thing of the devil. II. Water designed by God for the use of man and beast; sin strictly prohibited by Him. III. Water necessary for man's existence, sin not only not necessary but ruinous. IV. Water beneficial to the drinker of it, sin only hurtful and destructive.[c]

*The holiness of God.*—The holiness of God is not to be conceived of as one attribute among others: it is rather a general term representing the conception of His consummate perfection and total glory. It is His infinite moral perfection crowning His infinite intelligence and power. There is a glory of each attribute viewed abstractedly, and a glory of the whole together. The intellectual nature is the essential basis of the moral. Infinite moral perfection is the crown of the Godhead. Holiness is the total glory thus crowned.[d]

**17—19.** (17) **I . . thee,** this he does in the rest of the chap. wh. is a violent declamation. (18) **which . . fathers,** see *v.* 10. **and . . it,** but freely communicated it. (19) **earth,**[a] land where they lived. **and . . them,**[b] when unbroken traditions of the primeval world and purity of life prevailed.

*The unreliableness of tradition.*—Would persons as readily believe the correctness of a report transmitted by word of mouth in popular rumours from one end of the kingdom to another, as if it came in a letter passed from one person to another over the same space? Would they think that because they could trust most servants to deliver a letter, however long or important, therefore they could trust the same to deliver the contents of a long and important letter in a message by word of mouth? Let us put a familiar case. A footman brings you a letter from a friend upon whose word you can perfectly rely,

giving an account of something that has happened to himself, and the exact account of which it concerned you to know. While you are reading and answering the letter, the footman goes into the kitchen and there gives your cook an account of the same thing, which he says he overheard the upper servants at home talking over as related to them by the valet, who said he had it from your friend's son's own lips; the cook relates the story to the groom, and he in turn tells it to you. Would you judge of that story by the letter, or the letter by the story?[c]

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speaks like a genuine Arab, whose pride is in his tongue, his sword, and his pure blood."—*Umbreit.*

c *Illus. of Truth.*

**the state of the ungodly in this life**

20–22. (20) **wicked . . days,**[a] a constant sufferer through his sin. **and . . oppressor,** or, a limited number of years is reserved for the oppressor. (21) **dreadful . . ears,**[b] sounds created by his fears.[c] **prosperity . . him,** all this was in all. to the case of Job himself. (22) **believeth . . darkness,** *etc.*, his sin destroys all hope of recovery.

*The deceitfulness of sin.*—Sin deceives, as it promises—1. Pleasure; 2. Profit; 3. Impunity. Sin promises all pleasure. and in the end robs of all peace. Men are apt still to trust in that by which they have been deceived. All unrenewed men are deceived.[d]

*Deceitfulness of sin.*—It hath many secret ways of insinuating; it is like a Delilah; it is like a Jael to Sisera; sin is a sweet poison. it tickleth while it stabbeth; the first thing that sin doth is to bewitch. then to put out the eyes. then to take away the sense and feeling; to do to a man as Noah's daughter did to him. make him drunk. and then he doth he knoweth not what. As Joab came with a kind salute to Abner, and thrust him under the fifth rib, while Abner thought of nothing but kindness, so sin comes smiling. comes pleasing and humouring thee, while it giveth thee a deadly stab.[e]—*Groundless fears.*—It is curious to think how often these needless fears, which cause so much unnecessary anxiety and misery, are the result of pure miscalculation; and this miscalculation not made in a hurry, but deliberately. I have a friend who told me this. When he was married. he had exactly £500 a year, and no means of adding to that income. So, as he could not increase his income. his business was to keep down his expenditure below it. But neither he nor his wife knew much about household management; and (as he afterwards found) he was a good deal victimised by his servants. After doing all he could to economise, he found, at the end of the third month of his financial year, that he had spent exactly £125. Four times £125, he calculated. made £600 a year, which was just £100 more than he had got; so the debtor's prison appeared to loom in view; or some total change in his mode of life. which it seemed almost impossible for him to make. without very painful circumstances. And for weeks the thought almost drove him distracted. Day and night it never was absent. At length. one day, brooding over his prospects, he suddenly discovered that four times 125 made just 500, and not 600; so that all his fears were groundless. He was relieved, he told me: but somehow his heart had been so burdened and sunk by those anxious weeks. that though the cause of anxiety was removed. it was a long time before it seemed to recover its spring. Now my friend had all his wits about him. There was nothing whatever of that causeless delusion which shades off into insanity. But somehow he thought that $125 \times 4 = 600$; and his conclusion was that ruin stared him in the face.

a Ps. cx. 12.

b 1 Th. v. 3; Ac. xii. 22. 23; 1 Sa. xxv. 36–38.

c "The panic fears of a conscience-stricken criminal, however wealthy and noble, rob him of rest, and prevent him from enjoying his prosperity."—*Wordsworth.*

d *Dr. Robinson.*

"Fear in itself is a thing not sinful. For is not fear a thing natural, and for men's preservation necessary, implanted in us by the provident and most gracious Giver of all good things, to the end that we might not run headlong upon those mischiefs wherewith we are not able to encounter, but use the remedy of shunning those evils which we have not ability to withstand?"—*Hooker.*

e *Anthony Burgess.*

"Death has a deep meaning, and many issues. We cannot by searching find it out. None of us have seen its other side. Death is like a mighty angel, with one foot standing on time and another on eternity."—*Arnot.*

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**the ungodly man is full of fears**

23—25. (23) **he . . bread,**[a] as one reduced to bitterest poverty. **darkness,**[b] destruction. (24) **king . . battle,**[c] ready to attack, and vain to resist. (25) **for,** *etc.*, the wicked man makes God his enemy, and treats Him as one.

*Effects of the first sin.*—There was a time when all the sin which was in the world was enclosed in one sinful wish in the breast of one woman. She had permission to eat of every tree but one, but that one God prohibited, saying, "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." A transient thought, immediately repressed or disapproved, would not have been sin; for, as Milton says,

> "Evil into the mind of God or man
> May come and go, so unapproved, and leave
> No spot or blame behind;"

but she indulged that wish, and hankered after that fruit; and in that sinful wish all the sin of the earth once lay. That wish became an act; and now let him who would write the sins and woes of earth first count for us the snow flakes of five thousand winters, and tell us the number of drops in all the rivers and oceans. "By one man's disobedience many were made sinners;" and their history is the history of wars, lust, intemperance, violence. O sin! what hast thou done? What canst thou not do?[d]

—*Needless fear.*—I believe that when you are worrying yourself by imagining all kinds of evils as likely to befall you, it will do you a great deal of good to be allowed to see something of other people, who are always expecting something awful to happen, and with a morbid ingenuity devising ways of making themselves miserable. You will discern how ridiculous such people look; how irritating they are; how, so far from exciting sympathy, they excite indignation. My friend Jones told me that after several months of extremely hard headwork, which had lowered his nervous system, he found himself getting into a way of vaguely dreading what may come next; and of receiving his letters in the morning with many anticipations of evil. But happily a friend came to visit him, who carried all this about a hundred degrees farther; who had come through all his life, expecting at least an earthquake daily, if not the end of the world. And Jones was set right. In the words of Wordsworth, "He looked upon him, and was calmed and cheered." Jones saw how like a fool his friend seemed; and there came a healthy reaction; and he opened his letter-box bravely every morning, and was all right again. Yes, let us see the Helot drunk, and it will teach us to keep sober. My friend Gray told me that for some little space he felt a growing tendency to scrubbiness in money matters. But having witnessed pinching and paring (without the least need for them) carried to a transcendent degree by some one else, the very name of economy was made to stink in his nostrils; and he felt a mad desire to pitch half-crowns about the streets wherever he went. In this case, the reaction went too far: but in a week or two Gray came back to the middle course, which is the safest and best.

**the headlong impiety of the ungodly**

26—28. (26) **even . . neck,** lit. *with* his neck: like a wild bull. **bosses,**[a] . . **bucklers,**[b] *i.e.* upon the heavily armed shields. (27) **because,**[c] *etc.*, *i.e.* he gives himself up to a life of animal pleasures. (28) **dwelleth,** or, shall dwell. The meaning is that

a "He is destined to be food for vultures."—LXX.

b Pr. i. 24—27.

c Pr. vi. 11, xxiv. 34.

He that stands below, and looks to the top of St. Paul's, or any other high place, thinks the people upon the height but children, while those below are giants. If he stands on the height, and looks down, the case is reversed. So it is with men. Their troubles and wordly interests seem great while grovelling among them; but let them get up where God resides, and how trivial will all appear!

d *N. Adams.*

"There needs no other charm, nor conjurer, to raise infernal spirits up, but fear, that makes men pull their horns in like a snail, that's both a prisoner to itself, and jail; draws more fantastic shapes than in the grains of knotted wood, in some men's crazy brains; when all the cocks they think they see, and bulls, are only in the insides of their skulls."—*Butler.*

a Boss fr. Fr.

rebellion against God and a life of self-indulgence lead to poverty.

*Ancient wrestlers.*—Wrestlers, before they began their combats, were rubbed all over in a rough manner, and afterward anointed with oil, in order to increase the strength and flexibility of their limbs. But as this unction, in making the skin too slippery, rendered it difficult for them to take hold of each other, they remedied that inconvenience, sometimes by rolling themselves in the dust of the Palæstra, sometimes by throwing fine sand upon each other, kept for that purpose, in Xystæ, or porticoes of the Gymnasia. Thus prepared, they began their combat. They were marched two against two, and sometimes several couples contended at the same time. In this combat, the whole aim and design of the wrestlers was to throw their adversary upon the ground. Both strength and art were employed to this purpose; they seized each other by the arms, drew forward, pushed backward, used many distortions and twistings of the body, locking their limbs in each other's, seizing by the neck or throat, pressing in their arms, struggling, plying on all sides, lifting from the ground, dashing their heads together like rams, and twisting one another's necks. In this manner, the athletæ wrestled standing, the combat ending with the fall of one of the competitors. To this combat the words of Eliphaz seem to apply, "For he stretcheth out his hand against God," like a wrestler, challenging his antagonist to the contest, "and strengthening himself," rather vaunteth himself, stands up haughtily, and boasts of his prowess in the full view of "the Almighty," throwing abroad his arms, clapping his hands together, springing into the middle of the ring, and taking his station there in the adjusted attitude of defiance. "He runneth upon him, even on his neck," or with his neck stretched out, furiously dashing his head against the other; and this he does even when he perceives that his adversary is covered with defensive armour, upon which he can make no impression: "he runneth upon the thick bosses of the bucklers."[d]

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*bosse*, = a bunch or lump; Du. *bosse*, or *busse*, the knob of a shield. A boss is a knob or protuberant ornament; generally, but not exclusively, applied to the knob of a shield.

v. 27. **Collop**, lumps, or slices of meat; still used in Yorkshire, and applied to rashers of bacon, whence the Monday before Ash Wednesday is there called Collop Monday.

"God knows, thou art a collop of my flesh."—*Shakespeare.*

*b* Mal. iii. 13; Da. v. 22, 23; Ac. ix. 5.

*c* De. xxxii. 15; Je. v. 26, 28.

*d Paxton.*

**29—31** (30) **he . . rich,**[a] *see* last ver. **prolong . . earth,**[b] his wealth shall not last, nor shall the benefits of it continue. (30) **he . . darkness,**[c] he shall not escape from calamity. **flame . . branches,**[d] the wrath of God shall consume him as a fire destroys a dry tree. **breath . . mouth,** by the blast of God. (31) **let . . etc.**,[e] or, "Let him not trust in vanity; he is deceived."

*The folly of trusting in vanity.*—Let us consider—I. The caution. Men are apt to trust—1. Vain conceits; 2. In vain possessions; 3. In vain hopes; 4. In vain purposes. Consider—II. The reason with which this caution is enforced. They shall reap—1. Disappointment; 2. Vexation; 3. Ruin. Observe—(1) How necessary it is to mark the state and habit of our minds: (2) How thankful should we be that there is an all-sufficient Friend to trust.[f]

*The value of trust in God.*—Several German princes were once extolling the glory of their realms. One boasted of his excellent vineyards: another of his hunting-grounds: another of his mines. At last, Abelard, Duke of Wurtemburg, took up the subject, and said. "I own that I am a poor prince, and can vie with none of these things: nevertheless, I, too, possess a noble jewel in my dominion; for were I to be without atten-

**the recompense of trusting in vanity**

*a* Ja. v. 1–5.

*b* "His possessions shall not be extended on the earth."—*Noyes.*—"Nor shall he be master of his own desires"—*Wemyss.*—"Nor their success spread abroad in the land."—*Good.*—"And his fortune shall not spread itself abroad in the land"—*Luther.*—"Neither shall he send his root in the earth."—*Vulg.*

*c* 2 Pe. ii. 9, 17;

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Ma. xxii. 11, 13; Jude 13.
*d* Ez. xx. 47; 2 Th. i. 7–9.
*e* Ga. vi. 7, 8.
*f C. Simeon.*
*g Gotthold.*

**the fate of the hypocrite**

dants, either in the open country or wild forests, I could ask the first of my subjects whom I meet to stretch himself upon the ground, and confidently place my head upon his bosom, and fall asleep without the slightest apprehension of injury." Was not this a precious jewel for a prince? I, however, have something better, for I can rest my head and heart in the lap of God's providence, and upon the bosom of Christ Jesus our Lord, with a perfect assurance that neither man nor devil can touch me there.*g*

**32—35.** (32) **accomplished,** cut off: *see marg.* **branch . . green,** but shall wither away. (33) **unripe . . vine,***a* as in this country a late frost will often strip a tree of its young fruit. **cast . . olive,***b* which the slightest breath of wind will scatter. (34) **congregation,** household, whole company, "appointed meeting:" *i.e.* the congregation wh. the hypocrite gathers round him: *i.e.* the hypocrite's congregation. **the . . bribery,** the homes of those who receive bribes. (35) **they . . vanity,** vanity, or emptiness, the great outcome of their plottings.

*The wind and the blossoms.*—A north or north-east wind frequently proves injurious to the olive trees in Greece, by destroying the blossom. Dr. Chandler says, "We ate under an olive tree, then laden with pale yellow flowers: a strong breeze from the sea scattered the bloom and incommoded us, but the spot afforded no shelter more eligible." In another place he observes, "The olive groves are now, as anciently, a principal source of the riches of Athens. The mills for pressing and grinding the olives are in the town; the oil is deposited in large earthen jars, sunk in the ground, in the areas before the houses. The crops had failed five years successively when we arrived; the cause assigned was a northerly wind, called Greco-Tramontane, which destroyed the flower. The fruit is set in about a fortnight, when the apprehension from this unpropitious quarter ceases. The bloom in the following year was unhurt, and we had the pleasure of leaving the Athenians happy in the prospect of a plentiful harvest."*c*—*Saint Anthony and the cobbler.*—We read a pretty story of St. Anthony, who, being in the wilderness, led there a very hard and strait life, insomuch that none at that time did the like; to whom came a voice from heaven, saying, "Anthony, thou art not so perfect as is a cobbler that dwelleth at Alexandria." Anthony, hearing this, rose up forthwith, and took his staff, and went till he came to Alexandria, where he found the cobbler. The cobbler was astonished to see so reverend a father come to his house. Then Anthony said unto him, "Come, and tell me thy whole conversation, and how thou spendest thy time." "Sir," said the cobbler, "as for me, good works have I none, for my life is but simple and slender. I am but a poor cobbler. In the morning, when I rise, I pray for the whole city wherein I dwell, especially for all such neighbours and poor friends as I have; after I set me at my labour, where I spend the whole day in getting my living; and I keep me from all falsehood, for I hate nothing so much as I do deceitfulness; wherefore, when I make to any man a promise, I keep it and perform it truly. And thus I spend my time poorly with my wife and children, whom I teach and instruct, as far as my wit will serve me, to fear and love God. And this is the sum of my simple life." In this story you see how God loveth those that follow their vocation, and live uprightly, without any falsehood in their

*a* Re. vi. 13.

*b* "In spring one may see the bloom, on the slightest breath of wind, shed like snow-flakes, and perish by millions."—*Tristram, Nat Hist. of Bib.* 375.

"Life's but a walking shadow; a poor player, that struts and frets his hour upon the stage, and then is heard no more; it is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing."—*Shakespeare.*

*c Burder.*

The hope of the hypocrite is like "a spider's web." Like the spider, the hypocrite weaves his web, his hope, his trust, out of his own bowels. It is the creature of his fancy; spun from the materials of self-righteousness. He may call it a garment to hide his shame, but it is a mere web, unfit to cover a naked soul, and easily rent. He may call it a house, but it is unavailable to "hide from the storm, or cover from the tempest." He may hold fast by it, but it shall fall, and he perish in the ruins. There is, there can be,

dealing. Anthony was a great holy man; yet this cobbler was as much esteemed before God as he.[c]

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no shelter, safety, nor security, in the cobweb of self-righteousness. If not stript off in the world, it will be swept away by the first breath of eternity.

*c Bp. Latimer.*

## CHAPTER THE SIXTEENTH.

**1–4** (1) **then . . said,** this and the next cap. contain Job's reply to Eliphaz. (2) **I . . things,** fitted to provoke, moral commonplaces. **miserable . . all** (*see* xiii. 4), irritating, disappointing. (3) **vain words,**[a] words of wind, light, trifling. **what . . answerest?** in such a way as this. (4) **I . . do,** easy to speak thus. **if . . stead,** if I were you. **shake . . you,** and look as wise and solemn at you, as you now at me.

*Retaliation.*—I. We observe that Job could have treated them as they treated him, if they had been in his position, but he would not. II. He could, but there would have been no need. III. He could, but they did not think so. IV. He could, but it was well that he had no opportunity.

*The doubtful talker.*—

> Dubius is such a scrupulous good man—
> Yes—you may catch him tripping if you can,
> He would not with a peremptory tone
> Assert the nose upon his face his own;
> With hesitation admirably slow,
> He humbly hopes—presumes—it may be so.
> His evidence, if he were called by law
> To swear to some enormity he saw,
> For want of prominence and just relief,
> Would hang an honest man and save a thief.
> Through constant dread of giving truth offence,
> He ties up all his hearers in suspense;
> Knows what he knows as if he knew it not;
> What he remembers seems to have forgot;
> His sole opinion, whatsoe'er befall,
> Centring at last in having none at all.
> Yet, though he tease and baulk your listening ear,
> He makes one useful point exceeding clear;
> Howe'er ingenious on his darling theme
> A sceptic in philosophy may seem,
> Reduced to practice, his beloved rule
> Would only prove him a consummate fool;
> Unless in him alike both brain and speech,
> Fate having placed all truth above his reach,
> His ambiguities his total sum,
> He might as well be blind, and deaf, and dumb.[b]

Job's reply to Eliphaz

**miserable comforters**

*a* Ps. xxii. 7, cix. 25.

*v.* 3. "The Hebrew has 'words of wind.' 'His promise! it is only wind.' 'His words are all wind.' 'The wind has taken away his words.' 'Breath, breath; all breath!'"—*Roberts.*

*v.* 4. "The whole of this passage is rendered unintelligible, in its usual mode of translating, by attributing a conditional instead of a future tense to it: 'I also *could* speak, etc.,' or, 'But I *could* speak,'—instead of, 'But I *will* speak,' or, 'talk on.'"—*Good.*

"A good word is an easy obligation; but not to speak ill, requires only our silence, which costs us nothing."—*Tillotson.*

*b Cowper.*

**5–8.** (5) **but,** if you were me, and I were you. **strengthen,** encourage, comfort. **assuage,** restrain. (6) **though I speak,** thus calmly and quietly, what boots it? (7) **he . . weary,** God has taken my strength away. **company,** family. (8) **thou . . wrinkles,**[a] *etc.*, "since thou hast bound me with chains, witnesses come forward."[b] **leanness . . face,** the idea seems to be—my poverty, etc., is turned into a reproach, and made to witness against me.

**what he would do if he were in their place**

*a* Ru. i. 21.

*b Wemyss.*

*A true comforter.*—To be a true comforter we require—I. To be able to sympathise with the troubled. II. To understand

"What is consolation? It is the relief of mind under any trouble or pain;

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or the presence and enjoyment of a good which is able to prevent altogether, or else carry away and bear down before it, as in a full tide or flowing stream, all evil felt or feared."—*Dr. Beaumont.*

*c Dr. Robinson.*

"We are always thinking we should be better with or without such a thing; but if we do not steal a little content in present circumstances, there is no hope of any other."—*Adam.* (Phil. iv. 11).

**the conduct of his persecutors**

*a* La. iii. 11; Ho. v. 14.

*b* Ps. xxii. 13, xxxv. 21.

*c* Is. l. 6; Ma. xxvi. 67; Jo. xviii. 22; Ac. xxiii. 2.

*d* Ps. xxxv. 15; Ac. iv. 27.

*v.* 9. "'Has not the cruel man been sharpening his eyes upon me?' 'His eyes are like arrows; they pierce my life.' 'Truly, his cutting eyes are always upon me.' 'Yes, yes; the eyes of the serpent.'"—*Roberts.*

"Words are the counters of wise men, and the money of fools."—*Hobbes.*

generally the meaning and use of trouble. III. To be acquainted ourselves with the truth with which we are to comfort others. IV. To possess the spirit and imitate the conduct of Him whose mission on earth was to "comfort them that mourn." V. To speak truthfully and suitably to the case, while we present such views of God and His dealings as are fitted to impart light and comfort to the sad and sorrowing.[c]

*Asswage.*—Asswage is found in but two passages of the Bible—Gen. viii. 1, in a neuter sense, "and the waters asswaged," where the Hebrew verb signifies properly to "sink down;" and Job xvi. 5, 6, "the moving of my lips should asswage your grief," "my grief is not asswaged," where the word in the original means to "keep back." It is sometimes found in the form "swage," as in Latimer, Serm. I., preached before the Convocation of Clergy—"But yet they that begot and brought forth that our old ancient purgatory pickpurse, that was swaged and cooled with a Francescan cowl." For the form with prefix "a" take Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, book iv. canto 3—

> "As when two tigers, pricked with hunger's rage,
> Have by good fortune found some beast's fresh spoil,
> On which they ween their famine to assuage."

The derivation is taken by Wright (*Bible Word Book*) from *assouager*, "to soften," "allay," which is deduced from the Latin *suavis*, through the old French *soef*, *souef*, "sweet," "soft." The prefix "a" is, as in so many other cases, intensive.

**9, 10.** (9) **teareth,** *etc.*,[a] fig. taken fr. the ferocity of wild beasts. **mine . . eyes,** all. to fierce and glaring eyes of lions, etc., when ab. to spring on their prey. (10) **they,** his persecutors. **gaped . . mouth,**[b] like the wild beast ref. to in *v.* 9. **they . . cheek,**[c] per. the greatest insult that can be inflicted on an Oriental. **they . . together,**[d] forming bands of conspirators ag. his peace.

*Slippering.*—From the following extracts, this treatment appears to have been considered very injurious. "Davagé was deeply incensed; nor could I do more than induce him to come to the factory on business while I was there; Mr. Pringle having, in one of his fits, struck him on the cheek with the sole of his slipper, the deepest insult that can be offered to an Asiatic; among whom it is considered as a mark of disrespect to touch even the sole of the foot."—*Lord Valentia.* "In the Mahratta camp, belonging to Scindia, his prime minister, Surjee Rao, was murdered in the open bazaar: his mistresses were, as usual, stripped of all they possessed; and his favourite one was sent for to court, and severely beaten in the presence of Scindia's wife, who added to the indignity by giving her several blows herself with a slipper."—*Broughton.* "When the vazir declared himself unable to procure the money, Fathh Ali Shah reproached him for his crimes, struck him on the face, and with the high wooden heel of a slipper, always iron-bound, beat out several of his teeth."—*Sir W. Ouseley.* The Hindoo, religiously abstaining from animal food and intoxicating liquors, becomes thereby of so very mild a temper that he can bear almost anything without emotion except slippering; that is, a stroke with the sole of a slipper or sandal, after a person has taken it off his foot and spit on it; this is dreaded above all affronts, and considered as no less igno-

minious than spitting in the face, or bespattering with dirt, among Europeans.[e]

**11—14.** (11) **God . . ungodly,** *etc.*,[a] as a captive, to do with him as they pleased. Job perceived what had really occurred. (12) **ease,** happy and secure. **but . . asunder,** crushed me. **take . . pieces,**[b] as an animal its prey. **mark,**[c] for His arrows. (13) **archers,** or, arrows. **compass . . about,** fly or whiz around me. (14) **he . . breach,** the attack is again and again renewed. **he . . giant,**[d] as a mighty and irresistible warrior.

*The seat of mental and moral sentiments and affections, as understood by the ancients.*—Every reader of the Bible has been struck with the curious use of the names of different parts of the body, when the affections and feelings are referred to. Thus we read (Job xvi. 13), "His archers compass me round about, He cleaveth my reins asunder," and also (Ps. vii. 9), "the righteous God trieth the hearts and reins." The word reins is derived from the Lat. *renes* = kidneys. This part of the human frame the Hebrews thought was the seat of knowledge, joy, pain, pleasure, and various other mental and moral sentiments and affections.

**15—17.** (15) **sewed . . skin,** not merely put but fastened on. It clung to his sores and could not be removed. **horn . . dust,**[a] *i.e.* his insignia of honour was defiled. (16) **foul,** swollen. **and . . death,** his sight had failed. (17) **not . . hands,** he still asserts his innocence of sins on acc. of wh his friends said he suffered. **my . . pure,**[b] sincere, not hypocritical.

*Purity in prayer.*—Prayer is pure when—I. Not in hypocrisy or out of feigned lips. II. When not accompanied with the practice of sin. III. When from right motives and for right objects. IV. When addressed to the only true God. V. When presented in a way according to His own will. VI. When offered with right disposition and feelings. VII. When made with humility through the one Mediator, and with faith in His atoning sacrifice.[c]

*Legend of prayer.*—The prayers of St. Basil were supposed by the Armenian Christians, partly from his sanctity and partly from his intellectual endowments, to have a peculiar, almost resistless power; so that he not only redeemed souls from purgatory, but even lost angels from the abyss of hell. "On the sixth day of the creation, when the rebellious angels fell from heaven through that opening in the firmament which the Armenians call Arocea, and we the Galaxy, one unlucky angel, who had no participation in their sin, but seems to have been entangled in the crowd, fell with them; and this unfortunate angel was not restored till he had obtained, it is not said how, the prayers of St. Basil. His condition meantime, from the sixth day of the creation to the fourth century of the Christian era, must have been even more uncomfortable than that of Klopstock's repentant demon in *The Messiah*."

**18—20.** (18) **earth . . blood,** all. to the old belief that the blood of one slain unjustly remains on the earth. **let . . place,** no rest till answered. (19) **witness . . heaven,**[a] men on earth witnessed against him: God—in heaven—witnessed for him. **record,** testimony. (20) **my . . me,** or. scorners are my friends. **but . . God,**[b] who would understand them though man might scorn.

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*e Burder.*

**he had been delivered to the ungodly**

*a* Ps. xxvii. 12; Job i. 15, 17.

*b* La. iii. 11, ii. 11.

*c* Jer. xxiii. 29.

*d* "As a warrior assaults a city." —*Wordsworth.* Blossoms are to plants what comforts are to Christians, very beautiful, but very fading.

**he asserts his integrity**

*a* Ps. lxxv. 10.

*b* Ps. lxvi. 18, 19; Pr. xv. 8.

*vv.* 17—19. *Dr. J. Donne*, i. 214.

*c Dr. Robinson.*

"*Emblems of prayer.* — Incense; a bow drawn by the hand of faith; the air by which we live; the little pitcher which fetches the water from the brook; the barometer of the soul; the tuning of an instrument; the link that connects earth with heaven; the 'gift of the knees,'—the Yoruba Christian's phrase for prayer; the letter sent from the child on earth to his 'Father in heaven.'"—*Bowes.*

**he asserts that his record is on high**

*a* Ro. i. 9.

*b* Heb. v. 7.

"In all ages and all countries,

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man. through the disposition he inherits from our first parents, is more desirous of a quiet and approving, than of a vigilant and tender conscience; desirous of security instead of safety; studious to escape the thought of spiritual danger more than the danger itself; and to induce, at any price, some one to assure him confidently that he is safe, to prophesy unto him smooth things, and to speak peace, even when there is no peace."—*Whately.*
*c G. Brooks.*
*d C. Simeon.*

**the way whence we shall not return**
*a* Job xiii. 20, 21. *b* Job vii. 21, xix. 25–27.
*v.* 22. *T. Boston*, iv. 67; *Dr. J. Disney*, i. 379; *D. Patterson*, 215; *T. Ainger*, 348; *A. B. Evans*, 115.
*c G. Brooks.*
"It is with us in this world as with poor men, that, being invited to a rich man's board, have the use of his plate and silver whilst they are there; but if any of them are so bold as to put up a piece of plate or a spoon, there is search made by the porter, ere they are let out, for what is missing. So it is with us in regard to temporal blessings. We have liberty to use them while

*The heavenly witness and record.*—View this text—I. In reference to Job. 1. A declaration of his belief; 2. An avowal of his sincerity; 3. A proof of his devotion. II. In reference to ourselves. 1. In seasons of self-suspicion; 2. Under assaults of calumny; 3. In the prospect of death.[c]—*Job's conscious integrity.*—It shall be my endeavour to unfold this passage in reference to Job. I. These words contain—1. An unquestioned truth; 2. A consolatory reflection; 3. A solemn appeal. II. Improve it in reference to ourselves. Address—1. The formal; 2. The hypocritical; 3. The calumniated; 4. The sincere.[d]

*A word to students for the ministry.*—The Rev. Dr. Payson, of America, being once asked what message he would send to the young men who were studying for the ministry in one of the colleges, thus addressed them:—"What if God should place in your hand a diamond, and tell you to inscribe on it a sentence which should be read at the last day, and shown there as an index of your thoughts and feelings! What care, what caution would you exercise in the selection! Now this is what God has done. He has placed before your immortal minds, more imperishable than the diamond, on which you are about to inscribe, every day and every hour, by your instructions, by your spirit, or by your example, something which will remain, and be exhibited for or against you at the judgment-day."

**21, 22.** (21) **O . . one,** O that He,—God. **would . . man,** for me,—Job. He prays that his judge may be his advocate. **man,**[a] *lit.* son of man. **neighbour,** his friend whom he knows and loves. (22) **few . . come,**[b] if years, yet few at the utmost. **way . . return,** the old way of all the race,—death.

*After a short time* (*v.* 22).—I. This is true; for—1. In a few years we shall all be dead; 2. In a few years our destiny will be unalterable, be fixed. II. This is instructive. 1. Let us not shorten our days; 2. Let us sit loosely to a world we must soon leave; 3. Let us be preparing for eternity.[c]—*Death a way.*—I. It is a strange way. II. It is a lonely way. III. It is a solemn way. IV. It is an unavoidable way. 1. Death is a way soon to be entered; 2. Death is a way never to be retravelled. I shall not return—(1) To my family; (2) To my business; (3) To my church.—*Dr. Thomas.*—*The final journey anticipated.*—I. Consider the momentous journey which is here anticipated. It is—1. Solemn in its nature; 2. Indisputable in its certainty; 3. Unknown in its commencement; 4. Important in its consequences. II. Describe the effect which this anticipation ought to produce. 1. It should elicit serious examination respecting our state of preparation; 2. Excite just fear in those who are unprepared; 3. Stimulate the righteous to constant watchfulness; 4. Furnish a source of consolation to the afflicted Christian.

*Appearance of death.*—Many a man has an ill-favoured countenance, is lean and haggard, pale and sallow, and mean in his attire, and yet, under an ungainly exterior, conceals great talents and virtues. Such is the case with death. Ah, me! how much that is good and sweet and blessed is concealed beneath its sour aspect and transitory bitterness! It is not I who die when I die, but my sin and misery. As often as I think of death, I figure to myself that I see a messenger coming from a distant land, bringing me good news of my Saviour, the Bridegroom of my

soul, and of the inheritance which He has purchased with His blood, and reserves for me in heaven. What care I although the messenger have an ugly face, be armed with a long dart, wear a tattered coat, and knock rudely at my door? I attend less to his appearance than to his business.[d] – *Comfort in view of death.*—I. That there is scarcely any man who has not, at one time or another, in the course of his life suffered more pain than is ordinarily felt by people when they die. The pang of death, says the excellent Mr. Ward, is often less than that of the tooth-ache. II. The covenant of God is of force with His people when they lie in the dust of the earth. Ages after the fathers of the Hebrew tribes were dead, the Almighty said, "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" (Matt. xxii. 31, 32). III. In death their union with Christ is continued; just as the personal union with the Divine and the human natures remained in Him when His body lay in the grave. When dead, they are "the dead in Christ" (1 Thess. iv. 16). IV. To them death is but a "sleep;" a temporary state, and a state of rest. Stephen "fell asleep" (Acts vii. 60); and all who, like him, die in faith and love, "sleep in Jesus" (1 Thess. iv. 14). V. Christ has taken away the sting of death, and thus deprived it of its terrors to all believers. He assumed the human nature, "that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. ii. 14, 15). VI. Death is but a sturdy porter, opening the door of eternity and letting us into heaven; a somewhat rough passage to eternal pleasures. VII. It is but a departing out of this world unto the Father in heaven (John xvi. 28). VIII. In the Old Testament it is called a gathering of the people to their fathers. IX. Jacob made little of it. "And Israel said unto Joseph, Behold, I die." "And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people" (Gen. xlviii. 21, xlix, 33).[e]

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here; but when we go hence, there is One waiting that will be sure to strip us, and suffer nothing to pass with us."—*Spencer.*

*d Gotthold.*

"Death is not dreadful to a mind resolved: it seems as natural as to be born. Groans, and convulsions, and discoloured faces, friends weeping round us, blacks, and obsequies, make death a dreadful thing. The pomp of death is far more terrible than death itself."—*Lee.*

Wishart, when in the fire which removed him from the world, exclaimed, "The flame doth torment my body, but no whit abates my spirits."

*e R. Bolton.*

## *CHAPTER THE SEVENTEENTH.*

**1, 2.** (1) **corrupt,**[a] fœtid, telling of decay. (2) **are . . me,** or, "Am I not altogether an object of mockery to my friends?"[b] **continue,** lodge, live. **provocation,** which is incessant.

*The waiting grave.*—Observe—I. It is good for us frequently to take a calm view of our condition as mortal and dying men. 1. It is true in reference to each what Job here says of himself; 2. Death is appointed to us. II. Death is near to us.[c]

*Death always ready.*—A man far advanced in years, or one who is in deep affliction, says, "The place of burning is near to me, and the wood is laid together for my funeral pile." "How are you, my friend?" "How am I? I will tell you. Go, order them to get the wood together to burn this body." A father sometimes says of his wicked sons. "Yes, I know they desire my death: they have been preparing for the funeral; they are ready to wash me: the bier is at hand, and the wood is prepared." "Why do you all look so anxious? I am not ready for the washing."[d]

**the waiting grave**

*a* Is. xxxviii. 10; Ps. lxxxviii. 3–5.

*b Spk. Com.*

*c Dr. Robinson.*

"Death is a commingling of eternity with time; in the death of a good man, eternity is seen looking through time."—*Goethe.*

*d Roberts.*

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**he asks in vain for a surety**

*a* He. vii. 22.

*b* Ma. xi. 25.

*c Dr. Robinson.*

A good conscience is better than two witnesses. It will consume your grief as the sun dissolves ice—it is a spring when you are thirsty—a staff when you are weary—a screen when the sun burns—a pillow in death.

"Blush at terror for a death which gives thee to repose in festive bowers, where nectars sparkle, angels minister, and more than angels share, and raise, and crown, and eternise the birth, bloom, bursts of bliss."—*Young.*

*d Good.*

**he had been made a by-word of the people**

*a* Pr. xxix. 5; Ps. xii. 3; Pr. xx. 9; 1 Th. ii. 5.

*b Lit.* "a man who gives up his friend to be despoiled."—*Spk. Com.* So *Wordsworth, Noyes, Wemyss.*

*c* 1 Ki. ix. 7; Ps. xliv. 14.

*d* Ge. xxvii. 1; De. xxxiv. 7; Zec. xi. 17; Ps. vi. 7, xxxi. 9.

*v.* 7. *T. Halliday, Ser. and Lec.* 1.

*e Dr. Robinson.*

"The loss of my friend, as it shall moderately grieve me, so it shall another way much benefit me, in recom-

**3, 4.** (3) **lay . . now,**[a] *i.e.* put down a pledge. **put . . thee,** he calls on God to put in his (Job's) surety. **who . . me?** and thus pledge himself, my surety with God? (4) **for . . understanding,**[b] and not understanding his cause they would not be surety for him. **therefore . . them,** by giving them their anticipated verdict.

*Job's appeal to God.*—We have a twofold ground of Job's request for a fair trial of his case by God Himself. I. The incapacity of his friends to judge in the matter. II. His consciousness of his innocence and that in the controversy he will gain the cause. Job is called to wage a double controversy. 1. As against God, in His appearing to afflict him as a wicked man; 2. As against his friends, in their charging him with being such.[c]

*Note on v.* 3.—The difficulty in this passage has resulted, in the first place, from the abruptness of the transition; and, secondly, from its being, in its common construction, very improperly separated from the preceding verse, and applied to the Almighty instead of to Eliphaz, the last speaker, to whom Job is peculiarly addressing himself. The fair interpretation is, "But if there be any meaning in what ye say—if ye do not revile my character, but believe me to be the oppressor and the hypocrite ye assert—come on: I will still venture to stake myself against any of you. Will any of you venture to stake me against yourselves? Who is he that will strike hands with me? that will dare to measure his deserts with my own? and appeal to the Almighty, in proof that he is a juster man than I am?" It is an *argumentum ad hominem*, of peculiar force and appropriation, admirably calculated to confound and silence the persons to whom it is addressed. The custom of staking one thing against another is of very early origin, and found in the rudest and simplest modes of social life; hence the pastorals of Theocritus, as well as of Virgil, abound with references to this practice.[d]

**5—7.** (5) **flattery,**[a] *lit.* booty.[b] **even . . fail,** his punishment shall reach to his children. (6) **byword,**[c] a term of reproach. **and . . tabret,** *lit.* as to my face. I am become an abomination. (7) **dim . . sorrow,**[d] weakened by much weeping. **all . . shadow,** emaciated by suffering.

*False friends.*—Observe—I. Treachery and unfaithfulness on the part of professed friends one of the most cutting trials with men, and the most condemning sins with God. II. Some sins are more heinous in themselves and more disastrous in their consequences than others. III. Sin in many cases entails its consequences on a man's children as well as on himself.[e]

*Considerate friendship.*—When the attempt was made upon the life of King George III. by Margaret Nicholson, as he was going to St. James's to hold a levee, a council was ordered to be held as soon as the levee was over. The Marquess del Campo, the Spanish ambassador, being apprised of that circumstance, and knowing that the council would detain the king in town three or four hours beyond the usual time, took post horses, and set off for Windsor. Alighting at the castle, he called upon a lady there with whom he was acquainted. The queen, finding that the king did not return at the usual time, and understanding that the marquess was in the palace, sent to ask him if he had been to the levee. He replied that he had, and that he had left his majesty

in perfect health, going to council. When the king arrived, he, of course, told her majesty the extraordinary occurrence of the morning. The queen expressed great surprise that the Marquess del Campo, who had been nearly three hours in the palace, had not mentioned the subject to her; he was then sent for, when he told their majesties that finding upon his arrival at the castle that no rumour of the attempt upon the life of his majesty had reached the queen, he did not think it expedient to apprise her of it till his majesty's arrival gave full assurance of his safety: but, at the same time, fearing that some incorrect and alarming reports might be brought down, he deemed it right to remain in the palace, in order, in that case, to be able to remove all apprehensions from her majesty's mind by acquainting her with the real facts. The king took the ambassador graciously by the hand, and assured him that he scarcely knew a man in the world to whom he was so much obliged.

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**8—10.** (8) **upright . . this,**[a] at his sufferings and men's treatment of him. **and,** *etc.*, stimulated by his example. (9) **righteous . . way,** conscious of his integrity. **clean hands,** *i. e.* a holy life. **shall . . stronger,**[b] in his attachment to God and holiness. (10) **return,** to the charge. **cannot . . you,**[c] a bitter irony, afterwards justified.[d]

*Dark dispensations overruled for the establishment of the saints.*—We will proceed to state—I. The general principles upon which the perseverance of the saints is founded. It may be proved—1. From the immutability of God; 2. From the covenant of grace; 3. From the intercession of Christ. II. The particular manner in which the most untoward circumstances shall be overruled to promote it. To guard against an abuse of this doctrine, we entreat you to bear in mind—1. The characters who alone can take comfort in it; 2. The way in which alone it should be improved.[e]—*Travelling home.*—I. The traveller—"the righteous." Not the innocent or the moral; but those to whom righteousness is imputed and precious, whose desire is to manifest it. II. The road. 1. Unknown: God leads us by a way that we know not; 2. Perilous: beset with foes, long, thorny, wearisome; 3. Narrow: only safe for careful feet; 4. Circuitous: when apparently nearing home the road leads far round. III. The staff. Faithful promises. A faithful God. IV. What all the travellers say. At some time or other all confess, with Job, their belief that "the righteous shall hold on their way."

*Providence helping the righteous.*—In the early part of his ministerial career, a circumstance occurred which he regarded as a particular interference of Divine Providence. Knowing that he could not always enjoy the benefit of the Polyglott Bible in the public library, he began earnestly to wish to have a copy of his own; but £3 per quarter and his food, which was the whole of his income as a preacher, could ill supply any sum for the purchase of books. Believing it to be the will of God that he should cultivate Biblical knowledge, both on his own account, and on that of the people to whom he ministered, and that the knowledge of the Scriptures in their original languages was necessary for this purpose; and finding that he could not hope to have money sufficient for this purchase, he thought that God, in the course of His providence, would furnish him with this precious gift. He soon after received a letter, containing a bank note of

pense of his want; for it shall make me think more often and seriously of earth and of heaven. Of earth, for his body which is reposed in it; of heaven, for his soul which possesseth it before me; of earth, to put me in mind of my like frailty and mortality; of heaven, to make me desire, and (after a sort) emulate his happiness and glory."—*Bp. Hall.*

**the way of the righteous**

*a* Ec. v. 8.

*b* Ps. lxxxiv. 7—11; 1 Pe. i. 5; Is. xl. 29—31; 2 Co. xii. 9, 10.

*c* 1 Co. vi. 5.

*d* Job xlii. 7, 8.

*e* 9. *T. Knowles*, i. 253.

*e C. Simeon.*

*v.* 9. "The idea here suggested is that of purity and holiness. Porphyry observes, that in the Leontian mysteries the initiated had their hands washed with honey, instead of water, to intimate that they were to keep their hands pure from all wickedness and mischief; honey being of a cleansing nature, and preserving other things from corruption."—*Burder.*

"Satires and lampoons on particular people circulate more by giving copies in confidence to the friends of the parties, than by printing them!—*Sheridan.*

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£10, from a person from whom he never expected anything of the kind. He wrote to a friend in London, who procured him a copy of "Walton's Polyglott," the price of which was exactly £10.

**11—13.** (11) **my . . past,** my life is nearly over. **my . . off,**[a] my plans are frustrated. **thoughts,** cherished schemes, hopes. (12) **they,** the things that have happened to me. **change . . day,** so that it is no time of rest and sleep. **light . . darkness,** the light of life is near, for the darkness of death is at hand. (13) **if . . house,** *lit.* truly I expect that the grave will be my home. **bed,** where I shall soon lie down. **darkness,** in the grave.

**broken purposes**

*a* Ro. i. 13.

*v.* 11. *H. Grove,* i. 141; *J. Grose,* i. 143; *C. J. Furlong,* 151.

*v.* 13. *W. Jay,* vi. 306; *F. Elwin,* i. 22.

*vv.* 13, 14. *Dr. J. Paterson,* 391.

*b J. W.* in the *Study* for 1873.

*c Dr. Parker.*

*Broken purposes.*—I. Men form purposes. Mind is active and made to think. Men speculate and resolve. II. These purposes not always fulfilled. 1. As they are impossible to realise; 2. Providence intervenes; 3. Procrastination prevents performance; 4. Satan hinders. III. This is a sad fact in experience. My purposes. Good resolutions formed and never carried out. Plans adopted and forsaken. Speculate less and work more.[b]—*Broken purposes.*—The world is full of broken columns. Every heart carries its own crowded cemetery. I. Employ this text—1. As revealing the speculative side of human nature. All men have purposes. Man cannot live by history alone, he must strengthen himself by hope. II. As disclosing the real side of human experience. "Purposes." That is poetry. "Broken." That is history. III. As suggesting man's true course as a speculatist and a worker. 1. All purposes against God must be broken of; 2. Remember the moral import of uncertainty.[c]

"In aspiring to the throne of power, the angels transgressed and fell: in presuming to come within the oracle of knowledge, man transgressed and fell; but in the pursuit towards the similitude of of God's goodness or love, which is one thing (for love is nothing else but goodness put in motion or applied), neither man nor spirit ever hath transgressed or shall transgress."—*Bacon.*

*Steadiness in purpose.*—Many who slumber in nameless graves, or wander through the tortures of a wasted life, have had memories as capacious, and faculties as fine as he (Macaulay), but they lacked the steadiness of purpose, and patient thoughtful labour, which multiplied the "ten talents" into "ten other talents beside them." It is the old lesson, voiceful from every life that has a moral in it—from Bernard Palissy, selling his clothes, and tearing up his floor to add fuel to the furnace, and wearying his wife and amusing his neighbours with dreams of his white enamel, through the unremunerative years; from Warren Hastings, lying at seven years old upon the rivulet's bank, and vowing inwardly that he would regain his patrimonial property, and dwell in his ancestral halls, and that there should be again a Hastings of Daylesford; from William Carey, panting after the moral conquest of India, whether he sat at the lapstone of his early craft, or wielded the ferule in the village-school, or lectured the village-elders when the Sabbath dawned. It is the old lesson, a worthy purpose, patient energy for its accomplishment, a resoluteness that is undaunted by difficulties, and, in ordinary circumstances, success.[d]

"Sarcasm I now see to be, in general, the language of the devil; for which reason I have long since renounced it."—*Carlyle.*

*d J. M. Punshon.*

**14—16.** (14) **corruption,**[a] of the grave wh. he foresees. **father,** *etc.*, he speaks of death as his nearest relative who will soon claim kindred with him. (15) **where . . hope?** of life. **as . . it,** if I have any hope, who will see its fulfilment? (16) **they,** my hopes. **to . . pit,**[b] to the lowest deep **when . . dust,** he and his hopes of life, etc., in this world would perish together.

**no rest but in the grave**

*a* Ps. xvi. 10; 1 Co. xv. 42, 53, 54. *b* Jno. ii. 6.

*v.* 14. "Those who retire from the world to spend their lives in a desert place, for the purpose

*Note on v.* 16.—Literally, to the *limbs*—"the grasping limbs," "the tremendous claws or talons" of the grave. The imagery is

peculiarly bold, and true to the general character under which the grave is presented to us in the figurative language of sacred poetry,—as a monster, ever greedy to devour, with horrid jaws wide gaping for his prey; and, in the passage before us, with limbs in unison with his jaws, and ready to seize hold of the victims allotted to him, with a strength and violence from which none can extricate themselves. The common rendering of *fulcra*, *vectes*, or *bars*, as of a prison, is as unnecessary a departure from the proper figure as it is from the primary meaning of the original term.[c]

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of performing religious austerities, often exclaim to the beasts, 'Yes; you are my relations, you are my parents; these are my companions and friends.'"—*Roberts.*

*c Dr. Good.*

## *CHAPTER THE EIGHTEENTH.*

**1—3.** (1) **then,** *etc.*, this second dis. of Bildad is composed chiefly of proverbs ill. the fate of the ungodly. (2) **long . . words?**[a] *lit.* how long will ye set snares for words?[b] **mark,** consider, understand. (3) **wherefore . . beasts,** as if we had no sense. **and . . vile,** silenced, *lit.* shut up, as unfit to speak.

*Note on v.* 2.—The commentators are not agreed to whom the opening of this speech is addressed. Being in the plural number, it cannot, according to the common forms of Hebrew colloquy, be addressed to Job alone. Le Clerc, however, attempts to prove that, under particular circumstances, such a form may be admitted, and especially when particular respect is intended. Other interpreters conceive that it is addressed to Job and Eliphaz, to whom Job had just been replying. But the greater number concur in supposing that it relates to the family or domestics of Job, in conjunction with himself, who, it may be conceived, were present, and at least tacitly approving his rebukes: "*Tu cum tuâ familiâ*," is the explanation of Reiske. It is more probable that it applies to the interlocutors generally.[c]

**the reply of Bildad**

**he reproves Job for ensnaring words**

*a* Pr. xviii. 13

*b* "How long wilt thou go on artfully and deceitfully devising words for the purpose of entrapping us."—*Wordsworth.*

"Words make truth to spangle, and its rays to shine."—*Bunyan.*

*c Dr. Good.*

**4—7.** (4) **he,** *i.e.* thou. **shall . . thee?** reproof of pride: shall all things give way for thee? **rock . . place?** must even fixed and established things give way? (5) **yea,** truly, behold. **light,** joy, happiness, prosperity. **spark . . fire,** the last spark of even the smouldering ashes. (6) **light . . tabernacle,**[a] the lamp that cheers the tent shall go out. The tent—the house—shall be joyless. **his . . him,** his hope and joy shall expire. (7) **the . . straitened,**[b] his mighty strides to prosperity shall be shortened. **and . . down,**[c] the plans in which he trusted shall precipitate his ruin.

*The king of terrors.*—I. The origin of his empire. II. The characteristics of his reign. III. The overthrow of his dominion.[d]

*Eastern lamps.*—I may take the opportunity of stating that the houses of the Arabs are never without lights. They burn lamps, not only all the night long, but in all the inhabited apartments of the house. This custom is so well established in the East, that the poorest people would rather retrench part of their food than neglect it. Therefore Jeremiah makes the taking away of the light of the candle, and the total destruction of a house, the same thing. Job describes the destruction of a family among the Arabs, and the rendering of one of their habitations desolate, after the same manner, "How oft is the candle of the wicked put out! and how oft cometh their destruction upon them!" On the other hand, when God

**the light of the wicked**

*a* Pr. xx. 20, xxiv. 20.

*b* "If a man do not keep within the limits of his powers, his wide steps shall be straitened."—*Ibn Doried.*

*c* Pr. i. 31, 32.

*d T. Barrow.*

*v.* 4. "'Foolish man, why are you so angry? Will your anger pull down the mountain, or take a single hair from the head of your enemy?' 'This evil is only felt in your own heart and house; it is your own destruction.'"—*Roberts.*

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*e Land of the Messiah, Mahomet, and the Pope.*

promises to give David a lamp always in Jerusalem (1 Kings xi. 36), considered in this point of view, it is an assurance that His house should never become desolate. So Virgil, *Æn.*, ii. line 281, "O lux Dardaniæ! spes O fidissima Teucrum!" "O Ilium's light, the Trojan's surest hope!"[e]

**snares laid for the ungodly**

*a* Ps ix. 15.

"His light being put out, he wanders ab. in darkness, and falls into the springes which he has set ab. his robber den to catch the unwary.'—*Spk. Com.*

*b Dr. Good.*

**8—10.** (8) **for . . net,**[a] wh. he set for others. **by . . feet,** not driven but walks into the snare. **he . . snare,** a covered pitfall. (9) **gin,** spring, or trap. **heel,** foot. **robber . . him,** ruin shall surprise him, as a robber an unsuspecting traveller. (10) **snare,** *etc.*, not only does he fall into his own snare, but is a prey to others.

*Note on ver.* 8.—The original implies a snare with pieces of wood, or other substance, put crosswise, or barwise, so as to sustain the deceitful covering of turf, or other soil, put over it to hide the mischief it conceals. The term is used (Exod. xxvii. 4) to express a grating, or network of brass. The same kind of snare or pitfall is still frequently employed throughout India in elephant-hunting.[b]

**the foes of the wicked**

*a* Jer. xx. 4; Le. xxvi 36.

*b* "Terrors here are represented as allegorical persons, like the Furies in the Gk. poets."—*Noyes.*

*c Merx.*

*d* "Death has his family; all diseases, sorrows, horrors, wh. come in his train, or go before him to prepare his way. In the hideous disease wh. devoured Job's strength, Bildad might see Death's firstborn. Thus the Arabians call a deadly fever, daughter of fate."—*Spk. Com.*

**11—13.** (11) **terrors,**[a] phantoms of the mind.[b] **drive . . feet,** startle him to his feet. (12) **his . . hunger-bitten,** "his prosperity shall be changed into famine."[c] (13) **strength . . skin,** muscles of his body. **firstborn,**[d] vigour, strength.

*Firstborn.*—The eldest son of the father: "Israel is my firstborn" (Exod. iv. 22)—*i.e.* my chosen and precious. "His glory is like the firstling of his bullock;" figuratively of Ephraim, and Joshua as a mighty head of that tribe (Deut. xxxiii. 17). "The firstborn of death shall devour his strength"—*i.e.* some exceedingly deadly disease (Job xviii. 13); "the firstborn of the poor shall feed"—*i.e.* the very poorest (Isa. xiv. 30). "Firstborn" became tantamount to "chief" or "principal." Psa. lxxviii. 51, "and smote all their firstborn in Egypt; the chief of their strength is the tabernacle of Ham." The title firstborn is applied in the New Testament both to Christ and to Christians, with some degree of analogy to the use of the expression in the Old Testament. In Col. i. 15 the Saviour is called the "Firstborn of every creature," as preceding all creation. Comp. Heb. i. 6, "When He bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world." He is the "Firstborn from the dead," not only as the first who rose again, never again to put on the tabernacle of mortality, but as the initiator of the life that is to be (Col. i. 18). He is the "Firstborn among many brethren" (Rom. viii. 29). Comp. Psa. lxxxix. 27. The "Church of the Firstborn," Heb. xii. 23, are the ransomed ones waiting for the completion of the whole body of the redeemed in heaven.

**the confidence of the wicked**

*a* Ps. cxii. 10; Pr. x. 28.

*b* "Terror pursues him like a king."—*Noyes.*—"Dissolution shall invade him like a monarch."—*Good.*—"Terror shall seize him

**14—17.** (14) **his . . tabernacle,**[a] there shall be no feeling of home safety. **it,** his calamity. **the . . terrors,**[b] death. (15) **it,** terror, fear. **brimstone,** the image of desolation. (16) **roots,** *etc.*,[c] there shall be desolation as complete as in a land sown with brimstone. (17) **his . . earth,**[d] he shall so utterly perish that not even the remembrance of his name shall survive.

*Additional notes* (*v.* 15).—A very singular method of expressing sorrow among the ancients, was by burning brimstone in the house of the deceased. Livy mentions this practice as general among the Romans; and some commentators think it is referred to in these words of Bildad: "Brimstone shall be

scattered upon his habitation." The idea corresponds with the design of the speaker, which is to describe the miserable end of the hypocrite.[e]— *Verse* 16.—Man is often described as a tree, and his destruction by the cutting off of the branches. "Alas! alas! he is like a tree whose branches have been struck by the lightning." "He is a tree killed by the shepherds;" which alludes to the practice (in dry weather, when the grass is burned up) of climbing the trees to lop off the branches and leaves for the use of the flocks and cattle. "His branches and shoots are destroyed;" which means himself and family. "I know all his branches and bunches;" meaning all his connections.[f]— *Verse* 17. —"What kind of man is Ramar?" "I will tell you: his name is in every street;" which means, he is a person of great fame. "Ah! my lord, only grant me this favour, and your name shall be in every street." "Who does not wish his name to be in the streets?" "Wretch, where is thy name? What dog of the street will acknowledge thee?" "From generation to generation shall his name be in the streets." "Where is thy name written, in stone? No; it is written in water."[g]

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as a king."—*Wemyss*

*e* Mal. iv. 1.

*d* Ps. xxxiv. 16

*e* *Paxton.*

"The world dares say no more of its devices than 'dum spiro spero' (whilst I breathe, I hope); but the children of God can add, by virtue of this living h pe, 'dum expiro spero' (whilst I expire, I hope)."—*Leighton.*

*f* *Roberts.*

*g* *Ibid.*

**18–21.** (18) **driven . . darkness,**[a] fr. prosperity to adversity. **and . . world,** and from adversity to death. (19) **neither,** *etc.*,[b] his family shall cease. **nephew,** grandchild. (20) **they . . astonished,**[c] when they hear the legends that hover about the land. (21) **surely,** *etc.*,[d] such is the conclusion of the whole matter.

**the doom of the ungodly**

*a* Pr. ii. 22.

*b* Je. xxii. 30.

*c* They that come after, are perh. the men of the West; those who went before, those of the East.

*d* Ex. v. 2, xii. 30.

*Death of Cardinal Mazarin.*—What a terrific picture does the following passage exhibit of the death-bed of a man devoted to the pomp and vanities of the world, and who is at ease in his possessions! A fatal malady had seized on Cardinal Mazarin, whilst engaged in the conferences of the treaty, and worn by mental fatigue. He consulted Guenand, the physician, who told him he had but two months to live. Some days after, Brienne perceived the Cardinal in his nightcap and dressing-gown tottering along his gallery, pointing to his pictures, and exclaiming, "Must I quit all these?" He saw Brienne, and seized him: "Look at that Correggio! this Venus of Titian! that incomparable Deluge of Caracci! Ah! my friend, I must quit all these. Farewell, dear pictures, that I love so dearly, and that cost me so much!" A few days before his death he caused himself to be dressed, shaved, rouged and painted. In this state he was carried in his chair to the promenade, where the envious courtiers paid him ironical compliments on his appearance. Cards were the amusement of his death-bed, his hands being held by others; and they were only interrupted by the papal nuncio, who came to give the cardinal that plenary indulgence to which the prelates of the Sacred College are officially entitled. Mazarin expired on the 9th of March, 1661.[e]

"It is hard to feel the hand of death arrest one's steps, throw a chill blight o'er all one's budding hopes, and hurl one's soul untimely to the shades, lost in the gaping gulf of blank oblivion." — *Kirke White*

*e* *Hist. of France, Lardner's Ency.*

## *CHAPTER THE NINETEENTH.*

**the answer of Job**

**1–3.** (1) **Job,** *etc.*, exhausted by the violent passion of his friends, he hurries fr. them to take refuge in God.[a] (2) **vex,**[b] torture, harass. **break,** crush, as in a mortar. (3) **ten times,**[c] *i.e.* many times. **ye . . not,**[d] *etc.*, their conduct so much the worse that they were not ashamed of it.

**he reproves them for their shamelessness**

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*Amount of talk.*—Perhaps it will not be an extravagant estimate to suppose that all are engaged in conversation, on an average, five hours a day. In a public address, an ordinary speaker proceeds at the rate of about fifteen octavo pages an hour. It is safe for us to adopt that rate in estimating conversation. We have, then, on an average five hours' conversation a day, proceeding at the rate of fifteen pages an hour. This makes a volume of five hundred and twenty-five pages a week. In threescore years and ten, the conversational aggregate would amount to a library containing the very respectable number of three thousand six hundred and forty volumes octavo.[e]

**4—6.** (4) **be . . erred,**[a] even granting it. **mine . . myself,** he had not wronged them, as they had him. (5) **magnify . . me,**[b] set themselves up as his judges. (6) **know,** *etc.*,[c] he appeals to them, to try to understand his case. **hath . . net,** he ought to have pity fr. men as one afflicted of Providence.

*Job's defence.*—He wards off their reproaches with three considerations. I. That he suffers alone the effect of his error, if he has committed any. II. That his offence if committed was an unconscious one. III. That his afflictions were from the hand of God.[d]

*Note on v. 6.*—The allusion here may be to an ancient mode of combat practised among the Persians, Goths, and Romans. The custom among the Romans was this: one of the combatants was armed with a sword and shield, the other with a trident and net: the net he endeavoured to cast over the head of his adversary, in which, when he succeeded, the entangled person was soon pulled down by a noose that fastened round his neck, and then despatched. The person who carried the net and trident was called Retiarius, and the other, who carried the sword and shield, Secutor, or the pursuer, because, when Retiarius missed his throw, he was obliged to run about the ground, till he got his net in order for a second throw, while the Secutor followed him, to prevent, and despatch him. The Persians used a running loop, which horsemen endeavoured to cast over the heads of their enemies, that they might pull them off their horses. The Goths used a hoop fastened to a pole.—*Olaus Magnus.* "In the old Mexican paintings we find warriors almost naked, with their bodies wrapped in a net of large meshes, which they throw over the heads of their enemy."—*Humboldt.*[e]

**7—9.** (7) **wrong,** violence. He does not seem to complain of injustice. **cry . . judgment,**[a] he could obtain justice fr. no one. (8) **fenced . . pass,**[b] he was as a traveller in a *cul de sac.* **he . . paths,** like a traveller in this strait overtaken by sudden night. (9) **glory,**[c] all that contributed to his respectability, and honour.

*Necessity for Divine superintendence.*—Our existence is dependent on a succession of changes, which are taking place at every moment in ourselves, over which we have no power whatever, but of which each one involves the necessity of the existence, and the superintending power, of the Deity. The existence of the whole material universe is of the same nature. Now each of these changes is, with infinite skill, adapted to the relative conditions of all the beings whom they affect, and they are subjected to laws which are most evident expressions of Almighty power, of unsearchable wisdom, and exhaustless goodness. Now, were

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e *Wordsworth.*

b Pr. xii. 18, xviii. 21.

c Ge. xxxi. 7; Le. xxvi. 26; Nu. xiv. 22; Ne. iv. 22.

d *vv.* 2, 3. "Three points are urged; his friends' cruelty, their pertinacity, and injustice."—*Spk. Com.*

e *Dr. J. T. Crane.*

**they should reflect that he suffered at the hands of God**

a 2 Co. v. 10; Ez. xviii. 4; Ga. vi. 5.

b Zep. ii. 10.

c Ps. lxvi. 10—12.

d *Dr. Robinson.*

"He that loses his conscience has nothing left that is worth keeping. Therefore be sure you look to that. And in the next place look to your health; and if you have it, praise God, and value it next to a good conscience; for health is the second blessing that we mortals are capable of—a blessing that money cannot buy — therefore value it, and be thankful for it."—*Izaak Walton.*

e *Burder.*

**he cried, but could not obtain justice**

a Hab. i. 2; Ps. xxii. 2; La. iii. 8.

b La. iii. 7.

c Ps. lxxxix. 44.

The great tome book of nature reveals many strange records of the past. In the red sandstone there are found in some places marks which are clear-

we merely intellectual beings, it would not be possible for us to consider anything more than these laws themselves; but inasmuch as we are intellectual and also moral beings, we are capable not only of considering the laws, but also the attributes of the Creator from whom such laws are the emanations. As everything which we can know teaches a lesson concerning God; if we connect that lesson with everything we learn, everything will be resplendent with the attributes of Deity. By using, in this manner, the knowledge which is everywhere spread before us, we shall habitually cultivate a devout temper of mind. Thus, "the heavens will declare unto us the glory of God, and the firmament will show His handy work;" thus, "day unto day will utter speech, and night unto night show forth *knowledge of Him*."[d]

**10—12.** (10) **he . . side,** there is nothing left. **he . . tree,** plucked up by the roots. (11) **he . . wrath,**[a] as, like a fire, wrath consumes, it is generally illus. by fire: hence the word "kindled." (12) **troops,**[b] troubles sent like an army of soldiers. **and . . tabernacle,** as if to lay siege to me.

*Green trees and dry trees.*—The venerable Mr. Wesley has caught the idea in his remarks on this passage: "The Jews compare a good man to a green tree, and a bad man to a dead one." In the East an abandoned character, a decided profligate, is still called a *patta-maram;* that is, "a dried or dead tree." "Why water that tree?" "Your money, your influence is all wasted there: cease, cease to attend to that dead tree." "The tree is dead; there are no leaves; it will never more give blossoms nor fruit; it is only fit for the fire." A spendthrift, or one who has been unfortunate, says, "I am a *patta-maram;* I have been struck by lightning." A good man is compared to a *talita-maram;* that is, a tree which has "spreading shady branches." People might repose there during the heat of the day: they have defence and comfort. Jesus was the "green tree," under whom the Jews might have reposed. If then, they did such things to the "green tree," what would be done to themselves, "the dry," the leafless trees of the desert? The lightnings of heaven did strike them: the Roman eagles did pounce on them: thousands were cut to the ground, and thousands went as slaves to the land of the conquerors.

**13—16.** (13) **he . . me,** *etc.*,[a] the trouble increased by the absence of those who, of all, should most comfort. (14) **kinsfolk,**[b] those who were *near*, not necessarily relations. (15) **they . . house,** the household. **alien,** *i.e.* a foreigner, with no claim to sympathy. (16) **I . . answer,** his dependents had ceased to respect and obey. **intreated,** commands being unavailing.

*A child's sympathy.*—A child's eyes; those clear wells of undefiled thought: what on earth can be more beautiful? full of hope, love, and curiosity, they meet your own. In prayer, how earnest: in joy, how sparkling; in sympathy, how tender. The man who never tried the companionship of a little child has carelessly passed by one of the great pleasures of life, as one passes a rare flower, without plucking it or knowing its value. A child cannot understand you, you think; speak to it of the holy things of your religion, of your grief for the loss of a friend, of your love for some one you fear will not love in return; it

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ly the impressions of showers of rain, and these so perfect that it can even be detected in which direction the shower inclined, and from what quarter it proceeded, and this ages ago. Even so sin leaves its track behind it, and God keeps a faithful record of all our sins.
*d Wayland.*

**his hope had departed like a tree**

*a* La. ii. 5.

*b* "The word 'troop' = bands sent out to ravage an enemy's country." — *Spk. Com.*
"Hope is the daughter of faith, but such as is a staff to her aged mother; and will produce a bold and wise profession of the truth before men, as also prayer to God. It is as the cork upon the net: though the lead on the one side sink it down, yet the cork on the other keeps it up."—*J. Trapp.*

**even his own house ceased to sympathise with him**

*a* Ps. lxix. 8, lxxxviii. 8, 18; Ma. xxvi. 56.

*b* Ps. lv. 12—14; Jo. xiii. 18; Ma. x. 21.

vr. 13, 14. *J. Parry*, 253.

vr. 15—27. *J. Alting, Op.* 2, par. 2, 166.

"Your hopes are like happy blossoms fair, and

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promise timely fruit if you will stay but the maturing."—*Ben Jonson.*

*c Mrs. Norton.*

**he was escaped with only the skin of his teeth**

*a* Is. iii. 5; 2 Ki. ii. 23.

*b* Ps. xli. 9, cix. 4, 5.

*c* Ps. cii. 5, xxii. 14—17.

*d Spk. Com.*—"And in the skin of my teeth am I dissolved."—*Good.*—"I have scarcely escaped with the skin of my teeth"—*Noyes.*—"Scarcely the skin in my teeth have I brought away as a spoil."—*Herder.*

*e* 20. *Dr. Talmage*, i. 146.

*e Hive.*

"Age should fly concourse, cover in retreat defects of judgment, and the will subdue; walk thoughtful on the silent, solemn shore of that vast ocean it must sail so soon."—*Young*

"Men of age object too much, consult too long, adventure too little, repent too soon, and seldom drive business home to the full period, but content themselves with a mediocrity of success."—*Bacon.*

"Where all life dies death lives."—*Milton.*

*f Burder.*

will take, it is true, no measure or soundings of your thought—it will not judge how much you should believe, whether your grief is rational in proportion to your loss, whether you are worthy or fit to attract the love which you seek,—but its own soul will incline to yours, and engraft itself as it were, on the feeling which is your feeling for the hour.[e]

**17—20.** (17) **my . . wife,** voice unrecognised by her: or, his breath had become loathsome. (18) **yea . . me,**[a] even these did not reverence or fear. (19) **all . . friends,**[b] most intimate friends. (20) **bone . . flesh,**[c] as we say "worn to a skeleton." **escaped . . teeth,** "the only parts unaffected by disease are the teeth with their skin, or gums."[d]

*The aged despised by the young.*—Consider the conduct of these children in—I. Its object. An old man, who on that account should have been reverenced. A good man, who should therefore have been loved. A poor man, who should have had kindness shown him. A poor man who had known better days, and should have had the more pity therefore. A man whose bodily ailments prevented self-help. II. Its cause. Want of thought: all they despised in Job might come upon them. Want of sensibility: young children should be tender-hearted. Want of manners: they should have known better; you do. III. Its effect. Upon Job: added to his grief; he had enough without this. Upon them: the exercise of this heartlessness would increase it; what would they be as adults, if such their childhood? They would incur the displeasure of God, who pities the unfortunate, and whose servant Job was. IV. Its lessons. Honour all men, more especially such as Job, the good, aged, unhappy. Be especially kind to the tried—those with bodily ailments, as blind, etc., and with mental defects, as the imbecile. Consider the conduct of Jesus to such. Do as you would be done unto.[e]

*The skin of my teeth.*—In the celebrated inscription on the pillar at Delhi, called the Lāt of Feeroz Shah, is the following passage, exhibiting a similar hyperbole in different terms: "Blades of grass are perceived between thine adversary's teeth."—*Asiatic Researches.* The author of the Fragments, subjoined to Calmet's Dictionary, thus paraphrases the passage: "My upper row of teeth stands out so far as to adhere to my upper lip, that being so shrivelled and dried up as to sink upon my teeth, which closely press it." He observes, if our translation be right, it may receive some illustration from the following instances of those who did not escape with the skin of their teeth. "Prithwinarayan issued an order to Suruparantana, his brother, to put to death some of the principal inhabitants of the town of Cirtipur, and to cut off the noses and lips of every one, even the infants who were not found in the arms of their mothers; ordering, at the same time, all the noses and lips that had been cut off to be preserved, that he might ascertain how many souls there were, and to change the name of the town to Naskatapir, which signifies the town of cut noses. The order was carried into execution with every mark of horror and cruelty, none escaping but those who could play on wind instruments: many put an end to their lives in despair; others came in great bodies to us in search of medicines; and it was most shocking to see so many living people with their teeth and noses resembling the skulls of the deceased."—*Asiatic Researches.f*

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**he craves pity at the hands of his friends**

**21, 22.** (21) **have,** *etc.*,[a] a last, touching, and unavailing cry for human sympathy. **for . . me,** the affliction in its weight was as the hand of God. (22) **why . . God,**[b] heavily and without deigning to give a reason. **are . . flesh?** he comp. them to wild beasts.[c]

*To a distant friend.—*

Why art thou silent? Is thy love a plant
Of such weak fibre that the treacherous air
Of absence withers what was once so fair?
Is there no debt to pay, no boon to grant?

Yet have my thoughts for thee been vigilant,
Bound to thy service with unceasing care—
The mind's least generous wish a mendicant
For nought but what thy happiness could spare.

Speak!—though this soft warm heart, once free to hold
A thousand tender pleasures, thine and mine,
Be left more desolate, more dreary cold
Than a forsaken bird's nest filled with snow
'Mid its own bush of leafless eglantine—
Speak, that my torturing doubts their end may know![d]

*a* Ro. xii. 15; He xiii. 3.

*b* Ps. lxix. 26.

*c* "Eater of flesh, is the Syriac expression for calumniator."—*Spk. Com.*

*v.* 21. *W. Enfield*, i. 101; *W. Gaban*, 448; *Dr. J. Nance*, 155; *T. St. John*, i. 303.

*d* *Wordsworth.*

**he would that his words were printed in a book. the living Redeemer**

**23–25.** (23) **written,** plainly, that I might not be misquoted. **printed,** carved, cut in. **book,** tablet, of stone, or metal. (24) **that,** *etc.*,[a] thought of *v.* 23 repeated. (25) **redeemer,**[b] Heb. *Goel*, one who has the right and duty to vindicate one who suffers wrong. **liveth,** is now living, though judging by my circumstances I seem to be friendless. **at . . day,** hereafter, in the end, at some future time. **earth,** dust.

*The living Redeemer.*—A little girl in a S. S. down amongst the hop-gardens of Kent said one day. "Teacher, I want you to tell me about a text that I don't quite understand." The text was Job xix. 25, and the matters not understood were indicated by five questions. I. What does the word Redeemer mean? Two ways to find out meanings of words. (1) Examine the word itself. Re-deem-er. deem = to buy. Re = back again. (Re-turn = turn back) er: impersonal ending—sinner = person who sins. Re-deem-er = person who buys back. (2) Note the connection in which the word is used. Read Isa. lii. 3 and Lev. xxv. 25. Thus both ways show us the meaning of the word. II. Why is Jesus called a Redeemer? Old Jewish custom of redeeming—(buying back with a price)—sold property. (Lev. xxv. 25, 26: Ruth iv. 1, 6, 8; 1 Kings xvi. 11.) The man who sold it might redeem it; or, if too poor, it became the duty of his nearest kin, if rich enough, to redeem it for him. We are "sold under sin." Christ as our Elder Brother—rich—has this duty of redeeming us, laid upon Him. (Luke i. 68.) III. How do we know that this Redeemer lives? (1) He is a Divine Being. You cannot conceive of such a Being, who has once existed, ceasing to exist. (2) Bible words about Jesus. "Ever liveth"—"same for ever," etc. (3) Signs of His being alive for evermore surround us. Letters from the absent prove them to be alive. Good men are letters written by Jesus. (2 Cor. iii. 3.) Suppose the sculptor's art was known to only one person, every time a new statue was erected you would be assured that the sculptor was living. Good men are living statues—polished stones—renewed in the image of Him who created them. But only Christ can produce such works of Divine

*a* Je. xvii. 1; De xxvii. 2, 3, 8; 2 Co iii. 1–6.

*b* Is. liv. 5, lix. 20; Ep. i. 7; Ps. xix. 14; Jo. v. 22–29.

*vv.* 23–27. *Bp. Andrewes*, ii. 252; *J. Benson*, ii. 438.

*v.* 24. *J. C. Dieteric, Ant.* 403.

*v.* 25. *Dr. T. Manton* 207 (1678); *Bp. Beveridge*, vii. 218; *D. Wilcox*, iii. 186; *J. Hales*, ii. 67; *J. Boudier*, 193; *D. Gilson*, 487.

*vv.* 25, 26. *Dr. T. Multer*, 18; *J. Newton*, iv. 435; *T. Thompson*, 370.

*vv.* 25–27. *Bp. Browning* ii. 253; *O. Heywood* v. 509; *J. Piggott*, 83; *Dr. J. Gill*, i. 352; *W. Farrington*, 23; *Is. Terry* 232; *Dr. J. Disney*, iv. 195; *J. Glazebrook* 196; *J. H. Stewart* 443; *H. J. C. Blake*, ii. 275; *Bp Copleston, Remains,*

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157; *F. W. Robertson*, i. 167.

About the tenth century, the cross became the only symbol of the Christian faith, to the exclusion of the fish, a previous emblem. From the death of Christ, it had been the symbol of redemption.

*c Hive.*

"There are men who imagine they should do well enough if they could throw the Bible overboard, and the ministers after it, and sink the whole Church in the sea. It is as if a man with a shattered limb should think to better himself by thrusting the doctor and their instruments out of doors. They did not break his leg, but only propose to set it. Under the hand of the poorest of them, the limb will be better than if the shattered bone were left to heal unsplintered."—*Beecher.*

he possessed the root of the matter

*a* 1 Co. xiii. 12, xv. 53; Phi. iii. 20, 21; 1 Jo. iii. 2; Re. i. 7.

*b* Nu. xxiv. 17; Is. xxvi. 19.

*c Spk. Com.*

*d* Ro. xiii. 1–4; Ma. vi. 1, 2.

*v.* 26. *Dr. R. Clerke*, 312.

*v.* 28. *A. B. Evans*, 127.

*e H. P. Bowen.*

*v.* 28. "'What is the root of art. The tools with which He works—Bible societies, Sunday schools, etc., etc., are all in active operation. Hence we are sure the Redeemer lives. IV. What is the advantage to us that Jesus the Redeemer lives? (1) To one in prison it would be a great advantage that the only person able to let him out is yet alive. Sinners are imprisoned in bad habits, tempers, etc.; Christ the only one who can deliver them. V. How may "I know that my Redeemer liveth"? (1) If you who were poor in faith and love are made rich toward God, you may be sure that Christ liveth in you the hope of glory. (2) If you who were once in bondage are brought into the glorious liberty of the children of God, and enjoying the liberty wherewith He makes His people free, you may be sure that the great Deliverer lives; and is your Redeemer.[c]

*A negro scholar.*—While a naval officer was inspecting one of the schools in the island of Barbadoes, containing two hundred negro boys and girls, a sign was made by one of the children (by holding up his hand), intimating that he wished to speak to the master. On going up to the child, who was somewhat more than eight years of age, the master inquired what was the matter. "Massa," he replied, with a look of horror and indignation, which the officer said he should never forget, and pointing to a little boy of the same age who sat beside him.—"Massa, this boy says he does not believe in the resurrection." "This is very bad," said the master; "but do you, my little fellow," addressing the young informer, "believe in the resurrection yourself?" "Yes, massa. I do." "But can you prove it from the Bible?" "Yes, massa. Jesus says, 'I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live;' and in another place, 'Because I live, ye shall live also.'" The master added, "Can you prove it from the Old Testament also?" "Yes; for Job says, 'I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.' And David says, in one of his Psalms, I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness.'" "But are you sure these passages are in the Bible? Here is a Bible, point them out to us." The little boy instantly found all the passages, and read them aloud.

**26-29** (26) **and .. skin,** now attacked by disease. **worms . body,** words supplied by translators. **yet .. flesh,** in my living body. **shall .. God,**[a] see Him manifest Himself as his friend and avenger. (27) **see,**[b] not merely hear of. **another,** a stranger. **reins,** kidneys, seat of desires and affections. **consumed,** wasted, pine away. (28) **but .. him,** prob. it should be,—"If ye shall say, 'how shall we persecute him?'"[c] **root .. matter,** the germ of true piety. (29) **sword,**[d] of justice, and Divine wrath. **that .. judgment,** that God punishes wrong done to character.

*True religion.*—The root of the matter we refer to Job's goodness—his religion—which is called a good thing in God's book. I. Religion is a reality. II. Religion is a reality in the soul; it must go further than the intellect and the judgment. III. Religion is a vital reality in the soul. "Root." IV. Religion is a vital reality in the soul, ever discernible. It is "found" in man, every principle, good or evil, develops itself. It is progressive in its character. Sufferings strengthen true principles.[e]

*The root of the matter.*—There are some seasons in which the life of a tree seems to be confined to the root; and thus it is often with the Christian. He may be in such a winter state that there may be little or no appearance of life, no present fruit, no buds and blossoms promising future fruit. There is the being of grace, but the vigour of grace is wanting. He is like a teil tree, or oak, which, through blighting winds or nipping frosts, has cast its leaves; but still there is a prospect, nay, certainty, of a revival, for "their substance is in them."

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his conversation?' 'Is his root right?' 'We cannot find out his root!' 'Ah! he has a good root.'"—*Roberts.*

*f B. Beddome.*

## *CHAPTER THE TWENTIETH.*

**the reply of Zophar**

**1–3.** (1) **then . . said,** trying, with greater coarseness, to prove the guilt of Job. (2) **thoughts . . answer,**[a] my inward persuasion and conviction. **for . . haste,** hurried by warmth of feeling. (3) **check . . reproach,** *i.e.* the words by wh. you have sought to check my reproaches. **spirit . . understanding,** emotions of my mind.

*Human avarice and ambition.*—Oh the infinite avarice and ambition of men! the sea hath both bottom and bounds, the heart of man hath neither. "There are those," as our Bromiard observes, "who in a fair pretence of mortification, like soaring kites, fly up from the earth and cry, Fie, Fie, in their flight, as if they scorned these lower vanities, and yet, when they have done, stoop upon the first carrion that comes in their eye;" false Pharisees, that under colour of long prayers devour widows' houses; Pharisaical votaries, that under colour of wilful poverty sweep away whole countries into their corban. One plots for a lordship, another for a coronet; one hath swallowed a crozier, another a sceptre, a third a monarchy, and a fourth all these. Of all the ambitions that have come to my notice, I do most wonder at that of Maximilian the First, who, being emperor, affected also to be pope; and for that purpose, in his letter written to the Baron of Lichenstein, offered the sum of three hundred thousand ducats, besides the pawn of four rich and preciously stuffed chests, together with the sumptuous pall of his princely investiture; whereof, said he, after we are seized of the papacy, we shall have no further use. Though why not, saith Waremundus, as well as Pope Boniface the Eighth, who, girded with his sword, and crowned with an imperial diadem, came abroad magnificently amongst the people, and could openly profess, I am both Cæsar and pope.[b]

**he is impelled to speak by his thoughts**

*a* Ro. x. 2; Ja. i. 19, 20.

"It is not for man to rest in absolute contentment. He is born to hopes and aspirations, as the sparks fly upwards, unless he has brutified his nature, and quenched the spirit of immortality, which is his portion."—*Southey.*

"Among the sources of those innumerable calamities which from age to age have overwhelmed mankind, may be reckoned as one of the principal, the abuse of words."—*Bishop Horne.*

*b Bp. Hall.*

**4–7.** (4) **knowest . . old,** as an old fact of human observation. **since . . earth,** fr. the beginning of time. (5) **triumphing.**[a] shouting, rejoicing. **joy . . moment,** as his character is disclosed. (6) **though,** *etc.*,[b] even if he attain to the highest honour and prosperity. (7) **yet . . dung,** as a loathsome thing. **they,** *etc.*, he shall utterly pass away. The question spoken in scorn.

**the joy of the wicked is transient**

*a* Ps. xxxvii. 35, 36, lxxiii. 18; Ex. xv. 9, 10; Ju. xvi. 27–30; Est. v. 11, 12, vii. 10.

*b* Am. ix. 2; Ma. xi. 23.

"We live in deeds, not years; in thoughts, not breaths; in feelings, not in

*The brief triumph of the wicked.*—Titus Oates was for a season, during the reign of Charles II., the idol of many Protestants in England. Wherever he appeared, men uncovered their heads. The lives of the most powerful seemed at his mercy. A clergyman of the Church of England, and professedly a determined opponent of the Papacy, his oath was credited, and many were

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figures on a dial: we should count time by heart-throbs. He most lives who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best." — *Shakespeare.*

*c Wesleyan S. S. Mag.*

condemned to imprisonment, confiscation, or death. Without doubt the wretch occasioned the execution of several innocent persons, and the grievous punishment of many. But an hour of retribution arrived. His cruel devices were detected, and the miserable man's punishment was terrible. He was sentenced to be stripped of his clerical habit, to stand in the pillory in various places, to be whipped from Aldgate to Newgate, and two days after to be whipped from Newgate to Tyburn. He was then to be imprisoned for life, being placed in the pillory five times every year. The dreadful sentence was carried into effect; except that, after a long period, he obtained his liberty, an impoverished, maimed, and despised man.[c]

**life is as a dream**

*a* Ps. lxxiii. 20, xc. 5.

*b* Ps. xxxvii. 36, ciii. 16.

*c* Pr. vi. 31.

"Life is vainly short, a very dream of being; and when death has quench'd this finer flame that moves the heart, beyond is all oblivion, as waste night that knows no following dawn, where we shall be as we had never been; the present, then, is only ours."—*Mallet.*

*d Dr. Thomas.*

"We go to the grave of a friend, saying, 'A man is dead;' but angels throng about him, saying, 'A man is born!'"—*Beecher.*

*e Hugh Macmillan.*

**8—10.** (8) **dream,**[a] wh. wholly vanishes. (9) **eye**[b]**.. him,** and was dazed by his greatness. (10) **his .. poor,** who shall demand reparation. **hands,** of his sons. **shall .. goods,**[c] unjustly acquired.

*The dream of life.*—I. A dream implies a dormancy in certain faculties of our nature. II. A dream fills the mind with illusive visions. 1. Man's notions as to what his life here will be are illusions; 2. Man's notions as to what constitutes the blessedness and dignities of life are illusions. III. A dream is of very short duration.[d]

*Traces of life.*—The leaves of some trees, when they fall, leave no trace whatever behind: the scar left by their removal heals immediately; and on the smooth naked bark of the bough, in winter, there is no mark to indicate that it was once covered with foliage. There are other trees, however, on which the scars are permanent. The leaf drops off: but it leaves a seal-like impression behind on the stem: and no succeeding growth can obliterate it. Through summer's luxuriance and winter's desolation, the memory of the vanished leaf remains indelibly fixed on the tree, engraved, as if with a pen of iron, upon the bough which it once adorned. The tree may increase in size until it forms a grove by itself; but the signet mark left by the leaf, which fell from it when it was a mere sapling, still cleaves to it in the grandeur of old age. Many of the characteristic marks on the stems of palm trees and tree-ferns are due to the permanence of these scars, when their leaves are decayed and dropped off. And is not the lesson of analogy here very clear and impressive? How many there are who fade, and drop off the tree of humanity, and leave no trace of their existence behind! while others, when they fade and drop off the tree of life, leave behind them an impression which time will only make deeper—an empty space, whose perpetual vacancy reminds the survivors of an irreparable loss.[e]

**the sins of his youth inherited by the wicked**

*a* Ps. xxv. 7; Pr. v. 10, 11.

*b* Pr. ix. 16, 17; Ps. x. 7.

*c* Hence we have the saying "to roll sin as a sweet morsel under the tongue," wh. is

**11—14.** (11) **full .. youth,**[a] *lit.* full of youthful vigour. **which . dust,** *i.e.* the fruit of his sin shall lie down in the grave with him. (12) **though .. mouth,**[b] though it be a pleasure to him. **though .. tongue,**[c] as a gourmand prolonging the taste of a sweet morsel. (13) **though,** *etc.*, see *v.* 12. (14) **yet,** *etc.*,[d] sin so enjoyed shall be bitter in its consequences.

*The evil of sin.*—"This," observes Professor Harris, "is most expressive of the selfish character of sin, and herein lies its essential evil. When you put your finger in the fire, the evil is not the pain suffered, but the destruction of the finger. The pain is a good, it evinces the continuance of life in the finger, resisting the fire that destroys it, and warning you to withdraw it. The

evil is complete when the calcined bone lies insensible, consuming in the fire. So the evil of sin is not the suffering which it causes, but the bosom pleasure which it gives. The suffering from sin is so far good as it shows the continuance of moral sensibility. The evil is the heart's in sin, when the heart is happy, insensible in the fire."

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**15—17.** (15) **he . . riches,** glutted with wealth. **he . . again,**[a] ill-gotten wealth shall be disgorged. (16) **he . . asps,**[b] his wealth shall be as a poison corrupting his whole nature. (17) **he,** *etc.*,[c] he shall not enjoy prosperity, of wh. rivers, honey, *etc.*, are emblems.

*A seasonable text.*—An eminent minister seldom allowed any incident, at all capable of yielding moral improvement, to pass by without observation. The awful inflictions of the law in the death of felons were generally noticed from his pulpit. While at Cambridge, in the earlier part of his ministry, a singular instance of this kind is related, in which his knowledge of the Scriptures, and his readiness to adapt them to present occurrences, were remarkably displayed. Two men were apprehended for passing forged notes of the Bank of England; one of them, in the act of being taken, seized and swallowed a note to prevent detection. Mr. Hall kindly visited them in prison, and afterwards delivered a very impressive discourse from Job xx. 12—16.

often quoted as a part of Scripture.

*a* Pr. i. 31; Je. ii. 19.

v. 11. *Dr. T. Horton*, 64, 71.

vv. 12, 14. *Dr. J. Drysdale*, i. 113.

ill gotten wealth shall be reimbursed

*a* Pr. xxiii. 8.

*b* Ro. iii. 13.

*c* Je. xvii. 6; Is. lviii. 9—11; Ps. lxxxi 13, 16; Jo. vii. 37.

v. 17. "Is a man about to leave his native place, to reside in another country in hope of becoming rich, people say to him, 'We suppose there are rivers of ghee, and honey and milk, in the town where you are going to live!'"—*Roberts.*

**18-20.** (18) **that . . restore,**[a] he shall lose the fruit of his toil. **shall . . down,** shall not enjoy it. (19) **oppressed,** plundered. **because . . not,**[b] by unfair dealings. (20) **surely . . belly,** his gettings shall yield no satisfaction. **he . . desired,** his savings shall be taken away.

*Honourable restitution.*—In the month of January, 1821, a man of respectable appearance entered the Corn Exchange in Mark Lane, London, and advancing to one of the principal factors, asked him if he was the legal descendant of the head of a very ancient firm in that line, long since extinct. Being answered in the affirmative, he first made some further inquiries, confirmatory of the question, and departed. On the same day in the following week he again made his appearance with a bag, which he presented to the factor, containing three hundred and seventy sovereigns. The factor, of course, surprised at the transaction, began to make some inquiries; but the person refused to answer any questions, observing, the property was now returned to its rightful owner; that he wanted no receipt; and that it was a matter of no consequence who he was. On referring to old documents, it appeared that in the year 1782, the firm alluded to had a very extensive army contract, in the course of which a defalcation to nearly that amount occurred.[c]

restitution to the poor shall be made

*a* Je. h. 44.

*b* 1 Ki. xxi 19; Is. lvii. 21.

"Lot hasted to acquire wealth. For a while all seems fair; but soon every worldly prospect is blasted, and he ends his days a degraded tenant of the desolate cave of Zoar. Ahab envied Naboth the enjoyment of his vineyard, and Jehoiakim by unjust means grasped all that came within his reach; but both of them soon ended their career in deep disgrace."—*E. L. Magoon.*

*c* *Percy Anec.*

**21-23.** (21) **there . . left,**[a] he left nothing in his eating; as a glutton, not regarding the poor. **shall . . good,** there shall be none to look for. (22) **in . . sufficiency,**[b] in his best estate. **he . . straits,** even then he will be poor, as his proud expenses exceed his vast income. **every . . him,** he will have no friend, and make many foes. (23) **when,** *etc.*,[c] in the midst of his desires, and in the moment of their satisfaction.

*Restitution.*—A young female, who lived in the family of the Countess of Leicester in the seventeenth century, was prevailed

he shall be in straits in the

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**height of his prosperity**

*a* Pr. xxii. 22, 23; Am. iv 1, 2.

*b* Ecc. v 13, 14; Je. xvii 11.

*c* Mal. ii. 2; Nu. xi. 33; Ps. lxxviii. 29—31; Lu. xii. 20.

*c.* 23. *C. Love*, ii. 5, 6.

**the fate of the ungodly oppressor**

*a* Is. xxiv. 18; Am. v. 19.

*b* Ps. xxi. 9.

"Ambition, avarice—the two demons these which goad through every slough our human herd, hard-travelled from the cradle to the grave: how low the wretches stoop!"—*Young.*

**the emptiness of earthly possessions**

*a* Is. xxvi. 21; Lu. xii. 2; 1 Co. v. 5.

*b* Zep. i 18; Re. xviii. 17; Ma. xvi. 26.

*c* Ps. xi. 6; De. xxix. 18—20.

*d C. Simeon.* Cyrus, the Persian king, was accustomed to say, that did men but know the cares he had to sustain, he thought no man would wish to wear his crown. "A slave has but one master; the ambitious man has as many masters as there

on by some of the other servants, from time to time, to take money from her lady's cabinet, so that she afterwards calculated she might have taken from the countess, in the course of seven years, from thirty to forty pounds. After she had left this family, she became acquainted with the evil nature of sin, when her conscience reproached her, and she would gladly have made restitution, but was long unable. At length, on her being married, the lady with whom she then lived presented her with a sum of money, out of which she sent, by a Christian minister, sixty pounds to the lady's heir, as from one who had injured her; and when ten pounds of it were returned, she refused to apply any part of it to her own use.

**24—26.** (24) **he,** *etc.*,[a] war will impoverish him. **weapon,** armour. (25) **drawn,** *etc.*, vivid picture of the sufferings of the wounded. (26) **darkness . . places,**[b] being slain his hidden treasures shall be unknown till the fire consumes them.

*Restitution.*—Philip Henry relates a remarkable story concerning a good old friend of his, who, when young, being an orphan, was greatly wronged by his uncle. His portion, which was £200, was put into the hands of that uncle; who, when he grew up, shuffled with him, and would give him but £40 instead of his £200, and he had no way of recovering his right but by law: but before he would engage in that, he was willing to advise with his minister, the celebrated Dr. Twiss, of Newbury; the counsel he gave him, all things considered, was, for peace sake, and for the prevention of sin, and snares, and troubles, to take the £40 rather than contend; "And, Thomas," said the doctor, "if thou dost so, assure thyself that God will make it up to thee and thine some other way, and that they that defraud thee will be the losers at last." He did so, and it pleased God so to bless that little which he began the world with, that when he died, in a good old age, he left his son possessed of some hundreds a year, while he that wronged him fell into poverty.

**27—29.** (27) **heaven . . earth,** *etc.*,[a] all nature in arms against him. (28) **the . . depart,**[b] disappear. **and . . away,** like water. (29) **portion,**[c] the lot, fate, end. **heritage . . God,** so dif. fr. what he had appointed for himself.

*The emptiness of earthly possessions.*—From these words I take occasion to show what a poor creature a mere worldly man is. I. As viewed in himself. 1. As it respects his present enjoyments; 2. As it respects his future prospects. II. As viewed in contrast with the godly man. Such—1. Enjoy much in possession; 2. In reversion. Application:—(1) Seek not happiness in the way of sin; (2) Be not too intent on the things of this world; (3) Seek your happiness in God alone.[d]

*Omniscience of God.*—Lord Craven lived in London when that sad calamity, the plague, raged. His house was in that part of the town since called Craven Buildings. On the plague growing epidemic, his lordship, to avoid the danger, resolved to go to his seat in the country. His coach and six were accordingly at the door, his baggage put up, and all things in readiness for the journey. As he was walking through his hall with his hat on, his cane under his arm, and putting on his gloves, in order to step into his carriage, he overheard his negro, who served him as postillion, saying to another servant, "I suppose, by my lord's quitting London to avoid the plague, that his God lives in the

country, and not in town." The poor negro said this in the simplicity of his heart, as really believing a plurality of gods. The speech, however, struck Lord Craven very sensibly, and made him pause. "My God," thought he, "lives everywhere, and can preserve me in town as well as in the country. I will even stay where I am. The ignorance of that negro has just now preached to me a very useful sermon. Lord, pardon this unbelief, and that distrust of Thy providence which made me think of running from Thy hand." He immediately ordered his horses to be taken from the coach, and the baggage to be taken in. He continued at London, was remarkably useful among his sick neighbours, and never caught the infection.[e]

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are persons whose aid may contribute to the advancement of his future."—*La Bruyère.*

*e R. T. S.*

## *CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FIRST.*

**Job's reply**

**1—3.** (1) **Job answered,** Zophar had only spoken in general terms, but Job felt that he meant to apply his words to his case. So Job's answer had to be a vindication. (2) **diligently,** lit. *hear, O hear.* Serious matters call for double or diligent hearing. **this . . consolations,** *i.e.* you will find listening better than such talk:[a] their boasted consolations Job felt to be more like aggravations. (3) **suffer me,** do not interrupt. **mock on,** begin again your mockings.[b]

*The speech of the pulpit* (*v.* 3).—I. Suffer me to speak—1. Of human depravity; 2. Of Christ's atonement; 3. Of God's invitations; 4. Of Divine long-sufferance; 5. Of tender mercies; 6. Of God's promises: 7. Of threatenings; 8. Of rewards; 9. Of punishments. II. The liberty granted. "Now I have spoken," etc. 1. If your understandings will permit; 2. If you are rejecters of the Bible; 3. If you despise the counsels of heaven. But if you will not "mock on," then—(1) Forget not; (2) Pray for help: (3) Reduce knowledge to practice; (4) Think of the end of life; (5) Persevere to the end; (6) Labour to promote the glory of God.[c]

*Rule for preachers.*—"I was conversing with one of the first advocates in America. He said, the difficulty which preachers find in making themselves understood is, that they do not repeat enough. Says he, 'In addressing a jury, I always expect that whatever I wish to impress upon their minds, I shall have to repeat at least twice, and often I repeat it three or four times, and even more. Otherwise, I do not carry their minds along with me, so that they can feel the force of what comes afterwards.' If a jury, under oath, called to decide on the common affairs of this world, cannot apprehend an argument unless there is so much repetition, how is it to be expected that men will understand the preaching of the Gospel without it?"[d]

**he craves leave to speak**

*a* The LXX. trans. "Let *not* such be your consolations."

*b* Job xvii. 2.

"Listen attentively, instead of speaking with words, which you intend for consolations, but which are contumelies."—*Wordsworth.*

"The whole of Zophar's last speech must have left the impression on Job of a bitter sarcasm, and has dealt him the freshest, deepest blow."—*Delitzsch.*

*c W. Stevens.*

*d Finney.*

**complaining, even to man, he may well be troubled**

**4 6.** (4) **my complaint,** Vulg. *my disputation.*[a] **to man,** as if I expected satisfactory answers to my questionings from him.[b] **why,** *etc.*, since man can give so little explanation. **troubled,** marg. *shortened,* sorrow being said to contract the heart.[c] *Be impatient,* unable to hold out any longer. (5) **be astonished.** Job intended to say some intense things. **lay . . mouth,** attitude of silent awe and wonder.[d] (6) **trembling,**[e] at the mystery and apparent inequality of the Divine dealings.

*Opinions about preaching.*—What is preaching? is a question to which there would probably be as many replies as to what is

*a* Comp. Job vii. 13, ix. 27, x. 1, xxiii. 2.

*b* Job xvi. 20.

*c* The same Heb. word is variously trans. in Nu. xxi. 4; Ju. x. 16, xvi. 16; Mic. ii. 7; Pr. xiv. 29; Ex. vi. 9.

*d* Ps. xxxix. 9; Pr. xxx. 32.

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truth? Almost every minister, and almost every man, has his own taste, and his own standard, and his own weight, and his own measure on this subject. One man thinks that to preach means accurately to divide a given topic, logically to illustrate it, and to observe a perfect but cold propriety through the various steps and stages of the discourse. This is the mechanical plan of preaching. Another imagines preaching to be the exposition of a particular passage of Scripture, bring out from it all that is in it, and nothing more. This is the textual idea of preaching. Another cares not a straw for a sermon if it do not contain a train of rigid argumentation, diversified by occasional bursts of party rage, and strong squirts of the *odium theologicum*. This is the polemical idea of preaching. Another likes no preaching but what contains a string of appeals, and queries, and adjurations unconnected with principles, unsupported by reasonings, and loose as a rope of sand. This is called, though falsely, practical preaching. Another wants a sermon to be a series of electrical shocks—one burst from beginning to end; the clouds returning after the rain, and no cotton so thick, and no conscience so hard as to exclude or resist the perpetual tumult. This is the claptrap idea of preaching. Another wants flowers; whether natural or fresh from the soil, or artificial and faded, it does not matter; if he do but get flowers, and hear them rustling above his ears, in the breeze of brilliant declamation, he is quite satisfied, whether they keep him languishingly awake, or lull him into dreamy repose. This is the florid and Corinthian idea of preaching. Another is content with exclamations; he is not pleased unless every other sentence begin with Oh: the interjection Ah has to him a peculiarly pathetic sound; it seems to melt into his midriff like snow; and that preacher would be his Magnus Apollo, who would say, "Oh, we remark in the next place." This is the interjectional idea of preaching. Another desiderates chiefly delivery: no minister is a favourite unless his voice be musical, and his attitude smack of the boards; unless he indulge in a profusion of studied declamation, pointing to the four winds when he names them, and laying his hand gently on the heart, when he wishes to indicate that interesting organ. This is the material or anthropomorphic idea of preaching. Another judges of a sermon by its length, and likes it, either because it is an hour, or because it is only the half of the time. This is the arithmetical idea of preaching.[f]

**7—9. (7) wicked live,**[a] this difficulty the friends had shirked, dwelling only on the fact that wickedness was punished in this life, in order to prove that Job must have sinned.[b] (8) **seed is established,** Job was bitterly thinking of the loss of his own children: and the unqualified statements of both Bildad,[c] and Zophar.[d] (9) **safe from fear,** lit. *peace from* fear: *i.e.* peace itself, far removed from fear. Job's house had been broken up by calamities. **rod of God,**[e] with which He smites in punishment. God uses outward evils.

*Why the wicked are suffered to live* (*v.* 7).—I. To prolong their opportunity for becoming reconciled to God. II. For the benefit of others. III. That they may contribute to mature the piety, elevate the character, and heighten the future felicity of the saints. IV. That they may exhibit the loveliness of the Divine character. V. That they may furnish evidence of the

[a] Comp. David, Ps. cxix. 120; and Habakkuk iii. 16.
"The heathen god of silence was pictured with his hand upon his mouth."—*Fausset.*
"He who desires according to Paul to be apt to teach, must first himself be taught of God."—*Erasmus.*
"Those are the best preachers to the common people, who teach with the simplicity of a child."—*Luther.*
"Let your discourses be neither absolutely without ornament, nor indecently clothed with it."—*Augustine.*
"It requires all our learning to make things plain."—*Usher.*
"Preachers are to feed the people, not with useless daffodils and gay tulips, but with the bread of life, and medicinal plants springing from the margin of the fountain of salvation"—*J. Taylor.*
[f] *Gilfillan.*

**he marvels at the prosperity of the wicked**
[a] Comp. Asaph's difficulty, Ps. lxxiii. See also Jer. xii. 1—3; Hab. i. 12—17, Mal. iii. 14, 15.
[b] Job xx. 4—29.
[c] Job xviii. 19.
[d] Job xx. 10.
[e] Job ix. 34.
[f] *W. T. Hamilton, M.A.*
*v.* 7. *Dr. T. Amory*, i. 117.
"Patience is that by, which God

future state of retribution. VI. That they may furnish decisive evidence of the justice of God in His final disposal of them.*f*

*Treasures of the wicked.*—Every man is treasuring up stores for eternity: the good are laying up treasures in heaven, where moth doth not corrupt; the evil and impenitent are "treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath." What an idea is this! Treasures of wrath! Whatever the impenitent man is doing, he is treasuring up wrath. He may be getting wealth; but he is treasuring up wrath. He may be getting fame; but he is treasuring up wrath. He may be forming pleasing connections; but he is also treasuring up wrath: every day adds something to the heap. Every oath the swearer utters, there is something gone to the heap of wrath. Every lie the liar tells, every licentious act the lewd man commits, adds something to the treasure of wrath. The sinner has a weightier treasure of wrath to-day than he had yesterday: he will have a weightier to-morrow than he has to-day. When he lies down at night he is richer in vengeance than when he arose in the morning. He is continually deepening and darkening his eternal portion. Every neglected Sabbath increases his store of wrath: every forgotten sermon adds something to the weight of punishment. All the checks of conscience, all the remonstrances of friends, all the advice and prayers of parents, will be taken into the account, and all will tend to increase the treasures of wrath laid up against the day of wrath.*g*

**10—13** (10) **gendereth . . calveth,** these were things beyond the immediate control of man, yet even in these things God blessed the wicked. (11) **they,** the wicked, *v.* 7. **like a flock,**[a] to their sports, like a joyful flock sent to the pastures. **dance,**[b] the common sign of joyousness and freedom from fear. (12) **they,** the fathers. **timbrel,** Heb. *toph:* French, *tambourin:* an instrument that is struck. **harp,** Heb. *cinnor,*[d] an instrument having strings. **organ,** Heb. *ugab.*[e] a wind instrument, the pipe of reeds, or flute, used by shepherds.*f* (13) **wealth,** good, or prosperity. **in a moment,** without long sickness.*g*

*Frivolous amusements.*—Attending places of vain and fashionable amusement tends to stifle all serious reflection, and cherish a vain and airy temper, and to promote an idle and dissolute life. It tends to make young people forget that they are sinners, and that they must die and come to judgment. It tends to render them deaf to all inward warnings of God's Spirit, and to the checks of their own consciences, and deaf to all the outward calls of the Gospel, the counsels of their ministers, their parents and other spiritual friends.*h*—*Recreation allowable.*—They who look with a severe and indignant eye upon all the recreations by which the cares of men are relieved, and the union of society is cemented, are, in two respects, injurious to religion. First, they exhibit it to others under a forbidding form, by clothing it with the garb of so much unnecessary austerity: and next, they deprive the world of the benefit which their example might afford, in drawing the line between innocent and dangerous pleasures. By a temperate participation of those which are innocent they might successfully exert that authority which a virtuous and respectable character always possesses, in restraining undue excess. They would show the young and unwary at what point they ought to stop. They would have it in their power to regulate, in some degree, the

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patiently endures the absence of a good that is loved, desired, and hoped for, and the presence of an evil that is hated; and which spares sinners, not only that He may through them execute the judicial acts of His mercy and justice, but that He may likewise lead them to repentance; or may punish with the greater equity and more grievously, the contumacious."—*Arminius.*

*g J. A. James.*

**they are wealthy and seem to be happy**

*a* Ps. xvii. 14.

*b* "Not formal dances, but skip, like lambs, in joyous healthful play."—*Fausset.*

*c* Trans. *tabret* in Ge. xxxi. 27.

*d* Ge. iv. 21, xxxi. 27; 1 Sa. x. 5.

*e* Ge. iv. 21.

*f* Organ in the Vulg., LXX., and A. V. is the double flute, or, rather, the Pandean pipe."—*Spk. Com.*

*g* Ps. lxxiii. 4.

*h Bellamy.*

"Sweet recreation barr'd, what doth ensue, but moody and dull melancholy, kinsman to grim and comfortless despair; and at their heels, a huge infectious troop of pale distemperature and

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foes to life."—*Shakespeare.*

[f] *Blair.*

**they foster pride in their prosperity**

[a] Ps. x. 4; 2 Ti. iv. 3; Ro. i. 28; viii. 7; Jno. iii. 19.

[b] Ex. v. 2; Mal. iii. 14.

[c] 1 Ti. iv. 8.

[d] Or, *may it be far from me!—Schultens, Ewald, etc.*

"Be it far from me that so I should speak, according to their way of thinking, with which, on the contrary, I disavow all fellowship."—*Delitzsch.*

[e] *T. H. Skinner, M.A.*

*v.* 14. *W. Fenner, Wks.* ii.; *J. F. Osterv'd,* 333; *B. Beddome,* vii. 123.

*v.* 15. *Bp. Moore,* i. 319; *Bp. Smallridge,* 11; *Abp. Sharp,* iv. 102; *Dr. B. Ibbot,* ii. 172; *J. Hoole,* i. 49; *R. Farrington,* 217; *J. Orton,* ii. 61; *Dr. J. Langhorne.* i. 113; *Dr. G. Gregory,* 69; *W. Barrow, Bamp. Lec.* 307; *T. Dwight,* v. 49; *Dr. S. Charters,* ii. 280.

[f] *Dr. H. Bonar.*

A little boy, whose conduct made his mother say that she feared he did not pray, replied, "Yes, I do; I pray every night, that God will make you and pa like my ways better."

public manners, to check extravagance, to humble presumption, and put vice to the blush. But, through injudicious severity, they fall short of the good they might perform. By an indiscriminate censure of all amusement they detract from the weight of their reproof, when amusement becomes undoubtedly sinful. By totally withdrawing themselves from the circle of cheerful life, they deliver up the entertainments of society into the hands of the loose and the corrupted, and permit the blind power of fashion, uncontrolled, to establish its own standards, and to exercise its dangerous sway over the world.[f]

**14—16.** (14) **therefore,** better, *and yet.* **desire not,** the expression of natural enmity.[a] Knowing God's will checks self-indulgence. (15) **what . . Almighty,** what His special claims? The language of pride and independence.[b] **profit,** seeing they have all outward good, what is to be got by religion?[c] **if we pray,** Heb. *if we meet Him: i.e.* in the way of prayer. (16) **not in their** (own) **hand,** but in God's. They do not make it themselves. Therefore there must be some mystery in God's dealings beyond your comprehension. **far from me,**[d] however brilliant it may look, Job yet will not choose it, but will cleave to God.

*The utility of prayer* (*v.* 15).—I. It is adapted in its own nature to improve all the powers and properties of the human soul. II. Its influence is counteracting to whatever tends to injure the character. III. Its influence is efficacious on other tendencies that are favourable to the soul's welfare, as—1. Reading: 2. preaching, etc. IV. It has an influence upon the mind and conduct of God Himself.[e]—*Man's dislike of a present God.*—In our text we have worldliness versus God. It is the worldly man that is here speaking out. How is this? I. Not because God has injured him. II. Not because God has hated him. III. Not because God has interfered with his prosperity. It is because of the love of the world. This prompts men to try to get quit of God. I. They try to get quit of Himself. II. They try to get quit of His Christ. III. They try to get quit of His Spirit. IV. They try to get quit of His book. V. They try to get quit of His law.[f]

*Effects of prayer.*—A young man, who was employed in a large manufactory, was frequently made the butt of ridicule by his companions because he would not join in their drinking parties and Sunday frolics. Among these persons, the foreman was most prominent. One day, as the youthful Christian was at prayer, he was overheard by this foreman, who found that he was himself the subject of his supplications. He was presenting to God the darkness and infidelity of his heart, and earnestly imploring for him the blessings of repentance and faith. The foreman, who had never known anything of the true nature of prayer before, was deeply impressed with what he heard, and wondered at the eloquence and fervour with which his own unhappy case had been pleaded before God. "I never," said he to himself, "thus prayed to God for myself." The next day he entreated the instructions of the young man, and earnestly begged his prayers for him. They knelt down together, cried to the God of all grace, and found acceptance with Him. From that day they were bosom friends, went together to the house of God, and frequently united in their prayers and thanksgivings. Their conversation adorned their profession, and the mocker became a confessor of the grace which he had so often abused and turned into ridicule.

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**17, 18.** (17) **how oft,**[a] on these words the stress of Job's question lies. He admits that the wicked are punished in this life, but *how oft?* **candle,**[b] reverting to Bildad's figure, Ch. xviii. 5, 6. **sorrows,** lit. *cords*, "which lightning in its twining motion resembles." [c] *Snares*, in the sense of ensnaring destinies.[d] Before this sentence read, *you say*, for Job is taking up the words of the friends. (18) **stubble,** chopped straw, broken by the threshing: almost our *chaff*.[e]

*The end of the wicked.*—Their frail vessels, though built of the best materials, yet corrupted by the worm of sin, being conveyed by the ebb of time down the smooth river of life, are now hurried beyond the bar of death into the fiery and unfathomable sea of Divine wrath. In this most tempestuous ocean, tossed by the furious winds of Almighty indignation upon the raging billows of insupportable torment, they suffer a speedy and an eternal shipwreck. Dashed upon the rocks of ruin, or swallowed up in the gulf of despair, they are entirely lost, and not one broken piece of holiness or happiness remains, nor so much as a single plank of hope upon which they may expect, though after millions of ages, to escape to some land of rest. But—

"The hopeless soul,
Bound to the bottom of the flaming pool,
Though loath, and ever loud blaspheming, owns
'Tis justly doom'd to pour eternal groans;
To talk to fiery tempests, and implore
The raging flame to give its fury o'er;
To writhe, to toss, to pant beneath its load,
And bear the weight of an offended God."

And now they have no sleepy opiates to make them forget for one moment their misery; no amusement to divert their attention from their intolerable pain; and no consolation left to lighten, in any degree, the dreadful weight of their sufferings.[f]

**yet their life is uncertain and frail**

*a* *Gesenius* supposes that the word (*cammah*) rendered *how oft*, may even be interpreted as equivalent to *seldom*.

*b* Job xxix. 3; Ps. xviii. 28; Pr. xxiv. 20.

*c* *Fausset.*

*d* *Delitzsch.*

*e* Is. v. 24; Mat. iii. 12.

"Though we seem grieved at the shortness of life in general, we are wishing every period of it at an end. The minor longs to be at age; then to be a man of business, then to make up an estate; then arrive at honours; then to retire."—*Addison.*

*f* *J. Benson.*

**19—21.** (19) **layeth up,** reserveth. **iniquity,** the punishment of it. **for his children,** the friends maintained that the punishments of wickedness fell either on the man himself, or on his immediate offspring.[a] **rewardeth,** metes out to him the due reward of his wickedness. **know,**[b] in sense of *feel* it. (20) **see,** in his own lifetime. **drink,** God's wrath is represented as in a *cup*.[c] (21) **what pleasure,** *etc.*,[d] *i.e.* how can it be punishment to a man for his children to suffer when he is gone? **cut off,** prematurely.

**his wickedness is visited on his children**

*a* Job v. 4, xx. 10; see also Ex. xx. 5; Is. xiv. 21.

*b* Hos. ix. 7.

*c* Ps. xi. 6, lxxv. 8; Je. xxv. 15, 16; Oba. 16; Re. xiv. 10.

*d* "If the godless receives the reward of his deeds, he should receive it not in his children, but in his own body, during life."—*Delitzsch.*

Comp. Eccl. iii. 22. Secretary Walsingham wrote to Lord Burleigh: "We have lived long enough to our fortunes to our country, to

*The triumph of the wicked.*—How short is the triumph of the wicked! When they begin to crow, God stoppeth their breath; and judgment seizeth upon them when they think no danger near them. So, when Belshazzar was in his mirth with his nobles, the fearful hand wrote his doom upon the wall, and presently his mirth was changed into sadness, that he became as one that was stricken with a palsy: so, while Herod vaunted himself and the people honoured him like a god, the angel of God smote him upon his throne, and immediately he was devoured of worms in the face of them which honoured him; so, while the Philistines were triumphing and banqueting, Samson pulled the temple upon their heads; so, while the men of Ziklag were feasting and dancing, David came upon them and slew them; when the Israelites were at their manna and quails, even while the meat (saith David) was yet in their mouths, God took away their lives,

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our sovereign: it is high time that we began to live for ourselves and to God."

Do you want to know a prescription suitable for every pardoned sinner? It is contained in the words of the Great Physician: "Behold, thou art made whole; sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee."

*e H. Smith.*

when Job's children were making merry one with another, the wind came and blew down the house; while the old world was marrying and giving in marriage, the flood came and drowned them; while the steward was recounting with himself and thinking that his master knew not what policy was in his heart, suddenly his lord called him to account; while the churl was musing of his barns full of corn, and saying to himself, Be merry, my soul, that night his soul was taken from him: so, while we sin and think nothing of it, our sins mount up to heaven, and stand at the bar, and call for vengeance against us. How soon Abel's blood called for vengeance of Cain! We cannot sin so quickly but God seeth us as quickly. How many have been stricken while the oath hath been in their mouths, as Jeroboam was stricken while he spoke, that they might see why they were stricken! Though a man sin often, and steal his sins as it were without punishment, yet at last he is taken napping, even while the wickedness is in his hand, and his day is set when he shall pay for all; whether it be after twelve months or twelve years, when it cometh it will seem too soon.[e]

**God is just though men's affairs are unequal**

**22—26.** (22) **teach God,** whose ways may well be inscrutable. He reproves the attempt to decide what God *must* do. **high,** either the angels, heavenly spirits;[a] or better, the *proud*, who presume to read His secrets. (23) **one,** evil-doer. (24) **his breasts,** *viscera*,[b] *latera*.[c] Some trans. "His resting-places (*i.e.* of his flocks) are full of milk:" having reference to the milk-pails provided;[d] or troughs for the store of milk. (25) **in the bitterness,** having a life full of sorrow, while the other has a life full of joy. (26) **alike,** Eccl. ix. 2.

*The mental independency of God* (*v.* 22).—From this fact we infer—I. That all His operations must emanate from pure sovereignty. II. That all His laws must be the transcript of His own mind. III. That all His dispensations should be cordially acquiesced in. This is dictated by—1. Rectitude; 2. Expediency. IV. That all His revelations should be properly studied. 1. With an expectation of difficulties; 2. With the profoundest reverence.[e]

*Note on v.* 24.—When the mother dies before she has suckled her child, its life has been sometimes preserved by the milk of its father's breast. This curious fact was not unknown to Aristotle, who says, they that have a small quantity of milk, yield it in abundance when their breasts are sucked; thus women who are past age, by being often sucked, and even males, have yielded milk in sufficient quantity to nourish an infant. Humboldt declares, in his *Personal Narrative*, that he saw a man, an inhabitant of Arenas, a village not far from Cumana, Francisco Lozano, who suckled a child with his own milk. "The mother having fallen sick, the father, to quiet the infant, took it into his bed, and pressed it to his bosom. Lozano, then thirty-two years of age, had never remarked till that day that he had milk; but the irritation of the nipple, sucked by the child, caused the accumulation of that liquid. The milk was thick and very sweet. The father, astonished at the increased size of his breast, suckled his child two or three times a day during five months. We saw the certificate which had been drawn up on the spot to attest this remarkable fact, eye-witnesses of which are still living (1799). They assured us that during this suckling the child had no other

*a Delitzsch.*

*b Old version.* See Ps. xvii. 14.

*c Syriac;* preferred by *Gesenius.*

*d Abenezra.*

"The ancient versions specify some part of the body as the meaning of the word (*atin*), and this is confirmed by the parallelism."—*Wordsworth.*

*e Dr. D. Thomas.*

*vv.* 23—26. *D. Wilcox*, i. 256.

*v.* 24. "The margin has, for breasts, 'milk-pails.' Of a man who is very rich, it is common to say, 'His chattels (vessels) are full of milk.' But of a good king or governor it is said, 'He nourishes like the king, whose breasts are full of milk.' 'Yes; he so rules, that the breasts of the goddess of the earth are full of milk.'"—*Roberts.*

nourishment than the milk of his father. Lozano, who was not at Arenas during our journey in the missions, came to us at Cumana. He was accompanied by his son, who was then thirteen or fourteen years of age. Mr. Bonpland examined with attention the father's breast, and found it wrinkled like those of women who have given suck" The existence of milk in the breast of a male was known so early as the days of Job: "His breasts," etc.[f]

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"We know God easily, provided we do not constrain ourselves to define Him."—*Joubert.*

*f Paxton.*

27, 28. (27) **thoughts,** which they had not expressed. They made general observations, but they intended personal application to Job; they had insinuated his guilt. **devices,**[a] *stratagems*, malicious intrigues. (28) **prince,** rich or munificent chief. Job knew they meant himself by this term. **dwelling .. wicked,** assuming Job's were tents of wickedness bec. they had been destroyed.

*The Divine omniscience.*—He seeth to the core as well as the skin; into the darkness as well as the light; into the thought as well as the word: into the most retired secrecies of the heart as well as the most public acts of the life. Even as an artificer that makes a watch knows all its parts and operations, so God knows the heart and all its workings. As a man who might tell where an arrow would fall before it left the bow, so God can say precisely where such a desire, or thought, or intention, will end, and how it will proceed to the end, before it leaves the council chamber of the heart. He knows the thoughts afar off. The intents of the heart are known to Him. He knew all about Adam's sin before Adam hid himself. He knew all about Gehazi before Elisha spoke to him. It was God that told Elisha. He knew all about the sin of David, of Ananias and Sapphira, of Achan, etc., before the sins were publicly discovered. His knowledge brought them to light. And so He knows all sins now; and by His knowledge they are exposed, in the use of means which He first sets in motion.[b]

God knows the thoughts of men

*a* "The word is carefully chosen, as ambiguous. It may mean simply ingenious devices, or, more commonly, crafty, and disingenuous ones." —*Spk. Com.*

1 Pe. ii. 19.

A child instructed in a Sabbath-school, on being asked by his teacher if he could mention a place where God was not, made the following striking and unexpected reply: "Not in the thoughts of the wicked."

*b J. Bate.*

29, 30. (29) **go by the way,** mere wayfarers, the least observant people: or it may be that Job calls on them as unacquainted with the dispute, and so unprejudiced.[a] **tokens,** signs: their account of the matter. (30) **reserved to,**[b] preserved at. **brought forth,** out of the danger. Some think Job asserts here the judgment of the wicked in the *future*, but the verses should be taken in connection with the one difficulty he is stating, viz., that the wicked prosper, and are spared trials.

*Freedom of the wicked.*—All the freedom that wicked men have is but like that of banished men—to wander up and down in the wilderness of this world from one den and cave to another. Plato hath long since concluded concerning the condition of sensual men, that they live "like a shellfish;" and can never move up and down but in their own prison, which they ever carry about with them. Wicked men are most narrow and confined spirits: they are so contracted by the pinching particularities of earthly and created things, so imprisoned in a dark dungeon of sensuality and selfishness, so straitened through their carnal designs and ends, that they cannot stretch themselves, nor look beyond the horizon of time and sense.[c]

the prosperous wicked reserved to destruction

*a* In this appeal Job meets Bildad's appeal (Job viii. 8); and Zophar's (Job xx. 4).

*b* "At the time when streams of wrath go forth, they remain untouched; they escape them as if under a special, higher protection."—*Delitzsch.*

*c J. Smith.*

31–34. (31) **who,** *etc.*, the wicked even gets so confident in his safeties and prosperities that he will brook no reproof.[a] (32)

thus Job rebuts

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**all partial statements**

brought to the grave,[b] in pomp and honour. **remain,** *etc.*, with apparent allusion to embalming; or to his handsome tomb.[c] (33) **sweet unto him,** he thinks even of the grave with complacency, knowing that his memory will be cherished. "The common end of all is made sweet *to him* by the pageantry of his burial and his after-fame." **every man,** *etc.*, he knows he shares but the common lot of all men. (34) **falsehood,** lit. *wickedness.*[d] Their statements had been partial, and were contradicted by facts which they kept out of sight.

*True and false consolation.*—Life has many burdens, heavy or light. But much depends—I. On the state of mind in which the calamity finds us or produces in us. II. On the persons who administer it. III. On the kind of consolation administered. What is not consolation. 1. Sentimental saws; 2. Appeals to natural self-love; 3. Taking refuge in fatalism; 4. Ascribing all to our own desert; 5. Betaking oneself to pleasure. Instead of this, there must be—(1) The true interpretation of God's ways; (2) The true understanding of our circumstances; (3) The right knowledge of God's character.[e]

*Burial in the East.*—How came Job to speak of the clods of the valley, when describing magnificence of burial? I should suppose, in answer to this question, that Job is to be understood, not as intending to mark out the wonted places of their interment, but the manner of ornamenting their sepulchres: planting flowers and odoriferous herbs or shrubs on or about their graves. "Clods, like those of a valley or torrent, verdant and flowery, shall surround him, and be pleasing to him." The liveliness of Eastern poetry here representing the dead as having the same perceptions as if they were alive in their sepulchres: "He shall watch in the heap of earth, or stones, that cover him," for such the margin of our translation tells us, is the more exact import of the Hebrew: "The clods around him, like those in some pleasant valley, or on the border of some torrent, shall be sweet unto him."[f]

*b* "The word *brought* implies burial in state, with a procession of mourners."—*Spk. Com.*

Ecc. viii. 8; He. ix. 27.

*c* "He keeps watch over his tomb, he continues to watch, although asleep, since he is continually brought to remembrance by the monument built over his tomb."—*Delitzsch.*

*d* "Job distinctly charges them with evil intent, and wilful opposition to the truth."—*Robinson.*

*e Dr. H. Bonar.*

*f Harmer.*

## *CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SECOND.*

**the answer of Eliphaz**

**God is not affected by human character**

**1—4.** (1) **answered,** beginning the third series of speeches. His object is to show that he was right in inferring guilt from punishment.[a] (2) **profitable,** render any benefit to Him.[b] **unto himself,** better read, as marg., "When he, by acting wisely, profits himself, does his good success depend on himself?" (3) **ways perfect?** declaring so firmly thy integrity. They misrepresented God in thus affirming that He was not concerned with the character and conduct of men. (4) **into judgment?** for the explaining of His ways.[c] The meaning may be, "Will God reprove thee for thy fear of Him? can He punish thee for piety?"[d]

*God's independence of man* (*v.* 2).—We learn—I. That God is perfectly independent of man's character, whether right or wrong. 1. He is not affected by it; 2. He will not condescend to explain His treatment of it. II. Man's character is of the utmost importance to himself. "He that is wise," etc.[e]

*Personality of God.*—Any presentation of God as an official personage, who sits, as it is sometimes said, in the chair of state

*a* "Eli. shows that man's goodness does not add to, or man's badness take from, the happiness of God; therefore it cannot be that God sends prosperities to some, and calamities on others, for His own advantage. The cause of the

—as a mere governor of the universe—is a false presentation. God governs the universe, but He is not a mere governor. I may control men by my personal influence, but I am not a captain. I am not elected to anything. I do not act under any written law or constitution. So far as I control them, I do it by the play of my mind on theirs. I touch their interests, their sympathies, their enthusiasm. God governs the universe, not by His laws so called, but by Himself—by the direct throb of His soul. And, I repeat, any view of God which presents Him as an official personage, or in any way that leaves out personality, heart, sympathy, soul—is false! *f*—*Omniscience of God.*—The present moment! What scenes present themselves throughout the world in this actual point of time. The sun is rising over peaceful villages and cultivated fields; his noontide glare quivers over sandy deserts; and the purple shades of evening are falling over forest and moor. One half of the world is in darkness. Upon such varied scenes does the eye of God rest. But among the many millions of the human race, scattered through so many countries and climates, not one human being is hidden. Man can hide himself from his fellows. He can bury himself in the darkness of night; withdraw into the recesses of buildings, the depths of forests, or the loneliness of deserts. But none can hide himself from God. "Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from Thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to Thee." This, then, is the grand truth which so much concerns us—that all human beings are continuously in the sight of the most high God. At one glance He observes the prisoner in his cell, and the king in his palace; the crowds of great cities, the mariners in ships—"fragments of a world"—upon the silent waters; nobility and beauty in the gilded saloon, wretchedness and poverty huddled on the straw of miserable cellars. In that immediate and unbroken glance, the countries of the earth, the circumstances of each individual, as well as of each great nation, are all comprised. Here, where industry and peace have filled the land with busy cities and waving plenty; or again, where desolation has swept like the angel of death, and left in its track trampled harvests, deserted hearths, and untimely graves; in all the vast assemblage of human beings that now people the earth there is not one whose present position and lot are forgotten before the God and Father of us all. Every action, likewise, that is now transpiring in the world is manifest. None is so important as to engross His attention, none so minute as to elude His observation. How innumerable are those acts! How vast the compacity that at one glance can sum up that number! Yet the Divine Mind, with infinite ease, embraces all, alike in their number and in their diversity. Deeds of piety and sin, justice and injustice, love and violence, benevolence and hatred; the countless variety of acts springing from desires, appetites, passions, with all their combinations and consequences, are "naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do."

**5–8.** (5) **great,** judged by the severity of the punishment. **infinite,** a term to be treated poetically. Regarding Job's

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goods and ills sent must lie *in the men themselves."*—*Faussett.*

*b* Job xv. 3; see Ps. xvi. 2; Lu. xvii. 10.

*c* "Canst thou summon Him into court, as a defendant in a cause, as thou hast desired to do?"—*Wordsworth.*

Comp. Job's complaints, ch. vii. 12, 20, xiii. 3, 22.

*d Spk. Com.*

*e* v. 2. *Dr. R. South,* iii. 3; *E. Bertrand,* ii. 3.

*e Dr. D. Thomas.*

*f H. W. Beecher.*

"Even as darkness, self-impregned, brings forth creative light and silence, speech; so beams, known through all ages, hope and help of man, one God omnific, sole, original, wise, wonder-working wielder of the whole, infinite, inconceivable immense, the midst without beginning and the first from the beginning, and of all Being last."—*Bailey.*

"As night and shadows are good for flowers, and moonlight and dews are better than a continued sun, so is Christ's absence of special use, and it hath rare nourishing virtue in it, and giveth sap to humanity, and putteth an edge on hunger, and furnisheth a fair field to faith to put forth itself."—*Rutherford.*

he accuses Job of divers sins

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sufferings as severe humiliations, Eliphaz plainly accuses him of the violent self-willed acts of a proud man. (6) **hast taken,** Elip. means, "You must have taken;" he is hoping to make Job confess. **for nought,** without just claim; the act of an oppressor. **naked,** in Scrip. means *thinly clad.*[a] (7) **withholden bread,** sinning against the Eastern laws of hospitality, which were held as peculiarly sacred.[b] (8) **had the earth,** Job favoured only the great, despising the poor. **honourable,** here mere *favourites without deserts.*

*Sin an infinite evil* (*v.* 5).—I. What constitutes the evil of sin? When committed—1. Against light and knowledge; 2. In the face of many mercies; 3. After warning, reproof, etc.; 4. Against our own promises, resolutions, professions; 5. When we sin again after repentance. II. How may it be said to be infinite? 1. When it exceeds all ordinary bounds; 2. As committed against an Infinite Being; 3. In respect of number and nature of sins; 4. In regard to the will of him who commits it, depths of depravity in the heart. III. What should be the effect of such truths upon us? 1. We need to repent; 2. How needful the atonement! 3. How blessed to be forgiven! 4. How needful regenerating and sanctifying grace!

*Diet.*—By a sparingness in diet, and eating, as much as may be, what is light and easy of digestion, I shall, doubtless, be able to think more clearly, and shall gain time. First, by lengthening out my life. Secondly, I shall need less time for digestion after meals. Thirdly, I shall be able to study more closely, without injury to my health. Fourthly, I shall need less time for sleep. Fifthly, I shall more seldom be troubled with the headache.[c]—*Immoderate food.*—Too much food is as bad as too little. To sacrifice to the stomach that nervous energy which ought to be devoted to the brain—the organ of our most ennobling and most pleasurable faculties—is, so far as regards the retention of genuine manliness, little better than to commit suicide outright. Disease—though probably a third part of all that there is in the world is attributable to this cause—is the least of the evils that have to be afflicted on ill-regulated eating: infinitely more dire are the peevishness and ill-humour which it engenders, the gloom, hypochondriacal and dissatisfied tempers, which generally overtake the intemperate eater and drinker, and make him a pest both to himself and to society. Many a man's fall and ruin have come of the overloaded and thence disordered stomach of another; as many a man's rise and prosperity of another's temperance and cheerful health. No less destructive is intemperance to the intellectual energies. The intellects which lie sunk in sluggishness through overloading the stomach are incomparably more numerous than those which are slow and stupid by nature. The authors themselves of their condition, the cross and imbecile through overfeeding do not belong to society proper; they are not human, yet neither are they brutes, for no brute is intemperate—no longer men, gluttons and drunkards form an outside class by themselves, the nobleness of their nature to be estimated, as in all other cases, by the quality and end of their delights. It is worthy of remark, that nothing is more speedily and certainly destructive also of the beauty of the countenance. Diet and regimen are the best of cosmetics: to preserve a fair and bright complexion, the digestive organs need primary attention.[d]

a Is. xx. 2; Jno. xxi. 7; Ja. ii. 15.

b Ge. xviii. 4, 5, xix. 2, xxi. 14, 15, xxviii. 11; Ex. ii. 15.

v. 6. *Dr. D. Whitby*, 43 (1726).

"It is one of the thirty-two charities of the Hindoos 'to have water ready for the traveller to drink.' Hence, on the public roads, in front of the houses of charitable people, may be seen vessels filled with water, for the use of all who pass that way. But respectable men do not drink there: they go inside, and say, '*Conjum taneer*,' a little water; and it is given to them." — *Roberts.*

c *Presid. Edwards.*

"For the sake of health, medicines are taken by weight and measure; so ought food to be, or by some similar rule."—*Skelton.*

"The difference between a rich man and a poor man is this—the former eats when he pleases, and the latter when he can get it."—*Sir Walter Raleigh.*

"Swinish gluttony never looks to heaven amidst its gorgeous feast; but with besotted, base ingratitude, craves and blasphemes his feeder."—*Milton.*

d *Grindon.*

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**he is accused of oppressing the poor**

**9–11.** (9) **widows,** peculiarly helpless and dependent class in the East.[a] **arms,** supports, helps, that on which one leans. This may refer to Job's supposed violent ways as a magistrate.[b] (10) **snares,** ch. xix. 6. **sudden fear,** or calamity, something to fear. (11) **canst not see,** or "seest thou not the darkness, and the deluge that cover thee?"—deluge regarded poetically as overwhelming affliction.

*Poverty.*—

Turn now thine eye, and look on poverty—
Look on the lowest of her ragged sons;
We find him by the way sitting in the dust—
He has no bread to eat, no tongue to ask,
No limbs to walk, no home, no house, no friend;
Observe his goblin cheek, his wretched eye;
See how his hand, if any hand he has,
Involuntary opens, and trembles forth,
As comes the traveller's foot; and hear his groan—
His long and lamentable groan—announce
The want that gnaws within. Severely now
The sun scorches and burns his old bald head;
The frost now glues him to the chilly earth.
On him hail, rain, and tempest rudely beat;
And all the winds of heaven, in jocular mood,
Sport with his withered rags that, tossed about,
Display his nakedness to passers by,
And grievously burlesque the human form.
Observe him yet more narrowly. His limbs,
With palsy shaken, about him blasted lie;
And all his flesh is full of putrid sores
And noisome wounds: his bones of racking pains.
Strange vesture this for an immortal soul!
Strange retinue to wait a lord of earth!
It seems as Nature in some surly mood,
After debate and musing long, had tried
How vile and miserable a thing her hand
Could fabricate, then made this meagre man,
A sight so full of perfect misery,
That passengers their faces turned away,
And hasted to be gone.[d]

a See Ex. xxii. 22 Is. i. 17.

b Comp. Job's defence of himself in each particular, ch. xxix. 7–17.

c Comp. La. iii. 54.

"This proverbial form of speech is used when a man drags from another that which is his last resource. 'Why do you take this tax from the naked? What! take a cloth from the naked? Is there no shame?' How often, also, do we see a man seize another by the cloth on the public road, and swear if he will not instantly pay his debt, he shall be left naked."—*Roberts.*

"Be favourable unto the poor, which may be little; if thou wilt be aided of God against them that be mighty."—*Sir Thomas Smith.*

d Pollok.

**and of regarding God as indifferent**

**12–14.** (12) **in the height of heaven,** he affirms that God's heavenly attitude was made by Job the occasion for denying His providence on earth **height of the stars,** marg. *head of*, i.e. the extreme height, the middle of the vault of heaven; so the fixed stars, or the milky way.[a] (13) **how,** or what, of human affairs.[b] (14) **circuit,** or vault. Concerned with the higher things of heaven, and practically heedless of man.

*Fatherhood of God.*—The nature of God, as taught and exemplified by our Saviour, was certainly a large addition to the spiritual truth of the world. While men were yet comparatively rude, the Divine idea presented itself to them under the symbols of the state and the government, and justice and mercy were learned only in the rude ways by which men could comprehend them, through state and government; but in the hands and under the teaching of our Saviour, God is advanced, and He becomes more glorious in the fulness of the representations that are given of Him; not as any less the God of justice, and not as any less the

a *Delitzsch.*

*Stellarum verticum*, Vulg.

b "Eliphaz imputes to Job a scepticism like that of the Epicureans. See Ps. x 5, lxxiii. 11, xciv. 7; Is xxix. 15; Jer. xxiii. 23; Eze. viii. 12, ix. 9." — *Wordsworth.*

v. 12. *Dr. J. Dick, Scrs.*

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God that administers the affairs of this world, but as seen from the standpoint of the household, and as clothed with the authority and the attributes of fatherhood in distinction from monarchy. This truth has relations that reach far beyond what we suspect.[c]

**15–18.** (15) **marked,** as if you wished to follow. **old way,** of the violent sinners before the flood.[a] (16) **out of time,** by an untimely end. **whose,** *etc.*, trans. *their foundation flowed away as a river;* i.e. their houses were undermined by the stream.[b] (17) **do for them,** marg. *to them;* or, *to us.* The scornful boast of the atheistic. (18) **their houses,** gave them prosperity, but only for a time; the punishment at last came.[c] **counsel,** *etc.*, Elip. uses Job's words (xxi. 16), and applies them to Job himself.[d]

*Marking the ways of men* (*vv.* 15—17).—I. The way of wickedness an old way, but not the oldest. II. The way of God to sinners has always been the same. III. None are so high as to be out of God's reach. IV. The judgments of God are often sudden. V. Fancied security is often violently and completely overthrown. VI. The presence of God is a trouble to the wicked. From these things learn—(1) That it is a great advantage to mark the way; (2) To observe needful directions.

*Knowledge of God.*—The knowledge of God is called *simplex intuitus*, a direct beholding and looking on all things, as we do with our eye upon one particular object. Even as if a man's body were all an eye, he would see as well backward as forward, and the different positions of things would be no impediment to his sight; or as a man on a high tower, that seeth many passengers going by, one after another, though their motion be successive, yet the cast of his eye beholding them is in one moment. Hence the very heathen called God *totus oculus.*[e]—*Passibleness of God.*—There must be some kind of passibleness in God, else there could be no genuine character in Him. If He could not be pained by anything, could not suffer any kind of wound, had no violable sympathy, He could be anything but a perfect character. A cast-iron deity could not command our love and reverence. The beauty of God is that He has feeling, and feels appropriately toward everything done; that He feels badness as badness, and goodness as goodness—pained by one, pleased by the other. There must be so much, or such kind of passibility in Him, that He will feel toward everything as it is, and will be diversely affected by diverse things, according to their quality. If wickedness and wrong stirred nothing in Him different from what is stirred by a prayer, if He felt no disaffection toward a thief which He does not feel toward a martyr, no pleasure in a martyr, faithful unto death, which He does not in His persecutors, He would be a kind of no-character. We can hardly conceive such a being.[f]

**19, 20.** (19) **the righteous,** those really righteous, wh. you vainly boast yourself to be. **see it,** the proof of God's working in punishment of ungodly. **laugh,**[a] when the vanity of their boasting is shown by their calamities. (20) **whereas,** *etc.*, this is what the innocent are supposed to say; and it should read, "Verily they are destroyed, and the fire hath consumed their abundance." **substance,**[b] or opponents.

*The power of God.*—Power is that glorious attribute of God Almighty which furnishes the rest of His perfections. 'Tis His omnipotence that makes His wisdom and goodness effectual, and

**although He was merciful to those who denied Him**

*a* Ge. vi. 5, 7, 11, 12, 17.

*b Spk. Com.*

*c* Ps. lxxiii. 18—20.

*d* "Eliphaz persists in the misconception that Job had denied God's moral government of the world." — *Wordsworth.*

*v.* 15. *E. Cooper,* vi. 136.

*vv.* 15–17. *Dr. E. Payson,* ii. 53. "God is everywhere! the God who framed mankind to be one mighty family, Himself our Father, and the world our home." — *Coleridge.*

*e Anthony Burgess.*

Open evil at all events does this good; it keeps good on the alert. When there is no likelihood of an enemy's approaching, the garrison slumber at their post.

*f Dr. Bushnell.*

**the righteous rejoice in the justice of God**

*a* Pr. xi. 10.

*b* Heb. *kimanu,* from *kum,* to rise in hostile insurrection against.

*v.* 20. "There

succeed to the length of His will. Thus, His decrees are immutable, and His counsels stand; this secures His prerogative, and guards the sovereignty of His being; 'twas His power which made His ideas fruitful, and struck the world out of His thought. 'Twas this which answered the model of the creation, gave birth to time and nature, and brought them forth at His first call: thus, He spake the word, and they were made; He commanded, and they were created. 'Tis the Divine power which is the basis of all things; which continues the vigour of the second causes, and keeps the sun and moon in repair. This holds everything constant to appointment, and true to the first plan; thus, the revolution of the seasons, the support of animals, the perpetuity of species, is carried on and maintained. Without this, things would soon run riot, and ramble out of distinction; the succours of life would be cut off, and nature drop into decay. Omniscience and goodness without a correspondent power would be strangely short of satisfaction: to know everything without being able to supply defects, and remedy disorders, must prove an unpleasant speculation; to see so many noble schemes languish in the mind and prove abortive; to see the most consummate wisdom, the most generous temper, fettered and disarmed, must be a grievance; but when omnipotence comes into the notion, the grandeur is perfect and the pleasure entire.[c]

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can be little doubt that the reference is to the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah: and as all men are often spoken of as constituting one family or community, so the abandoned inhabitants of these cities are poetically represented as descendants or remnants of the wicked that perished in the flood."—*Good.*

"A foe to God was never true to man."—*Young.*

*c Jeremy Collier.*

**Job exhorted to that knowledge of God of which the fruit is peace**

**21—23.** (21) **acquaint,**[a] by thinking better thoughts of God come to better feelings. **be at peace,** *i.e.* so shalt thou be at peace.[b] **good,** in sense of eternal prosperities. (22) **the law,** not the Mosaic law, but, generally, *instruction.* **his mouth,** by humility and penitence drawing near to Him.[c] (23) **return,** as a penitent. **put away,** "assuming (like Zophar, ch. xi. 14) that Job's tents were filled with secret spoils."[d] Read, "*if* thou shalt."[e]

*a* Ecc. ii. 3.

From the old F. *accointer*, from L. *accognitare*, to make known.

*b* Ps. xxxvii. 27; Is. xxvii. 5.

*Acquaintance with God* (*v.* 21.)—I. What this acquaintance with God is. It implies—1. Knowledge; 2. Access; 3. Converse; 4. Love. II. That it is the duty of man to acquaint himself with God. 1. He is naturally estranged; 2. It is the highest improvement of existence; 3. It is the greatest of mercies; 4. God acquaints Himself with man. III. Motives to enforce this exhortation. 1. Character of God; 2. Effects of this acquaintance; 3. Danger of refusing; 4. Examples of the holy; 5. Promises of the text. IV. Directions to obtain acquaintance with God. 1. Get a sense of estrangement; 2. Get a humble heart; 3. Visit God often; 4. Take Christ with you; 5. Make acquaintance with friends of God; 6. Seek it earnestly, speedily; 7. Beware of all that places distance between you and God.[f]—*Acquaintance with God.*—I. What it implies. 1. Knowledge; 2. Love; 3. Enjoyment; 4. Intercourse. II. The means to attain it. 1. The Word; 2. Holy Spirit; 3. Prayer; 4. Faith in Christ. III. When to commence it—"Now." 1. It is God's time; 2. The only certain time. IV. The blessed results of it. 1. Peace; 2. Good.[g]

*c* This is good advice, but it offends because it assumes that Job is *out of* communion with God.

*d Spk. Com.*

*e* Zec. i. 3; 2 Ti. ii. 19.

*f J. Janeway.*

*g W. W. Wythe.*

*Note on ver.* 23.—The monks of St. Catherine, who have a monastery on the top of Mount Sinai, dared not even have a door in their monastery; they are literally built up, and everything that is received from below comes in a basket, let down from the top of the wall by means of a rope and pulley. Both persons and goods come and go in this way. To this kind of

*v.* 21. *Bp. Atterbury*, ii. 182; *Dr. J. Hunt*, iii. 327; *F. Webb*, i. 205; *Bp. Richmond*, 27; *W. Langhorne*, ii.

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91: *J. Riddoch*, ii. 197; *W. Barrow*, ii. 115; *J. P. Hewlett*, 143: *H. Blunt*, 85; *Dr. G. D'Oyly*, i. 371; *Abp. Sumner, Fest.* 397.

*h* **Dr. A. Clarke.**

**in that case his comfort and happiness should be great**

*a* "The meaning is, put away from thee the idol of precious metal with contempt; lay the Ophir under the rubble of the brooks, after it has lost for thee a previous bewitching spell."—*Delitzsch.* "There is a play upon the words in the original between *betser*, (gold) and *betsur* (a stone). Eliphaz insinuates that gold has been Job's chief god."—*Wordsworth.*

*b* "The natives of Malacca still call their mines *Ophirs*."—*Fausset.* *c* "Silver of treasures."—*Gesenius.* —"Silver of excellencies."—*Ewald.* *d* Ps. lxvi. 19, 20; Ecc. v. 4, 5; 1 Jno. v. 14, 15. *e* *H. W. Beecher.*

**and other good results shall follow**

*a* *Spk. Com.*

*b* Ps. cxxxviii. 6; Is. lvii. 15. lxvi. 2; Ezek. xvi. 26; Lu. xiv. 11; Ja. iv. 6.

*c* "The irony is strikingly exhibuilding up, Eliphaz seems to refer. And as this was considered a sufficient protection in a general way, yet God's building up alone can be universally safe and sufficient. His providence is the grand fortification; it is not only protection, but a source of support. The inhabitants shall dwell in safety: his bread shall not fail, and his water shall be sure. From such a tabernacle the wicked, the practisers of iniquity, aggression, and wrong, shall be put far away. In such a country, and in such circumstances, what a support must such a promise be, when the words were known to be spoken by Him who cannot lie! To the case of Job these things strongly apply. He lived in Uz, in Idumxa; and he himself, as well as his friends, were Edomite Arabs. His oxen and asses had already been carried away by a marauding company of Sabeans, a people that dwelt in Arabia Deserta, on the east of Uz. The Chaldeans, who carried away his camels, were a banditti of the same kind *h*

**24—27.** (24) **gold,** Heb. *betser*, native ore, of gold or silver: gold and silver as they are broken out of the mine, so unalloyed. **as dust,** lit. *lay it on the dust*, i.e. regard it of as little value as the dust.*a* **Ophir,** 1 Ki. ix. 28.*b* (25) **defence,** same word, *betser*, as in *v.* 24. **plenty of silver,***c* lit. *silver of mighty efforts*, drawing out and rewarding all man's energies. "Elegantly implying, it is less labour to find God than the hidden metals." (26) **lift . . face,** *see* ch. xi. 15. (27) **hear thee,** when thus thou seekest with clean hands, and a penitent heart.*d*

*Delight in the Lord* (*vv.* 26, 27).—I. The sublimity of its nature. 1. Saving knowledge of God; 2. Present enjoyment of God; 3. Future anticipation of God. II. The Divinity of its origin. The Almighty is—1. Suited to our capacities; 2. Adequate to our necessities; 3. Durable as our existence. III. The tendency of its influence. 1. Promotes confidence; 2. Communion; 3. Obedience to God.

*Preciousness of the Father's presence.*—As little children will frolic and play, and talk to themselves, and sing and be happy, if every time they look up they can see their mother's form or shadow, or hear her voice, so we are, in God's greater household, to have such a consciousness of our Father's presence as shall make us happy, cheerful, contented in our sports and duties. We are dear to God. He will not forget us, nor cease to take care of us. We are so much more precious than many things which He never forgets, that we stultify ourselves if we refuse to be serene, as they are serene.*e*

**28—30.** (28) **be established,** "the promise of immediate success on all enterprises has a touch of audacity."*a* **light,** success. (29) **when . . down,** reference is to Job himself. In time of temporary distress Job shall have hope. **humble,***b* Heb. *him that hath low eyes.* (30) **island,** or dwelling. In the Heb. the *negative* is expressed, and the sense is, "God shall deliver him who heretofore was *not guiltless*." **it is delivered,** he is delivered. **by the pureness,** upon the putting away of evil wh. Eliphaz has been recommending.*c*

*Reflection of God.*—The beautiful rays coming from the face of God, and shining in such loveliness around us, are reflected and refracted when they come in contact with the human heart. Each heart is apt to receive only such as please it, and to reject the others; hence the many-coloured aspects some of them,

hideous in the extreme, in which God is presented to different nations and individuals; hence the room for each man fashioning a god after his own heart. An evil conscience, reflecting only the red rays, calls up a god who delights in blood; the man of fine sentiment, reflecting only the softer rays, paints from the hues of his own feelings a god of mere sensibility, tender as that of the hero of a modern romance; the man of glowing imagination will array in gorgeous but delusive colouring, and in the flowing drapery of majesty and grandeur, beneath which, however, there is little or no reality; the observer of laws will represent him as the embodiment of order, as blank and as black as the sun looks when we have gazed upon him till we are no longer sensible of his brightness.[d]

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bited in Eliphaz unconsciously uttering words wh. exactly answer to what happened at last; he and the other two were delivered by God accepting the intercession of Job for them (ch. xlii. 7, 8.)"—*Fausset.*

*d McCosh.*

## *CHAPTER THE TWENTY-THIRD.*

**1—3.** (1) **answered,** in a spirit of utter exhaustion. **bitter,** Heb. *meri*, rebellion, obstinacy. "My complaint is *rebellion* in your eyes." **my stroke,** lit. *my hand*, the hand of God on me.[a] **than my groaning,** "so heavy that I cannot relieve myself adequately by groaning."[b] (3) **him,** *i.e.* God, of whom you speak. **seat,** tribunal, judgment-seat.[c]

*Job's desire after God, and his doctrine of prayer* (*vv.* 3, 4).—I. The desire expressed. It may spring from—1. Imperfection of evangelical knowledge; 2, Providential obscurity; 3. Darkness and desertion of soul; 4. Spirit of contrition; 5. Desire after communion. II. The resolution formed. These words describe the construction of a well-ordered prayer. 1. Why does God require argument in prayer? 2. Some efficacious arguments.

*True prayer.*—Prayer is the spirit's discourse with the Father of spirits, whereby she taketh high privilege to unburden her obligations, to unbosom her affections, to express her loyal fealty to her God and King; whereby she conveyeth up to heaven the finer senses of the soul, which hath no entertainment on the brute earth, but seeketh its home on the purified sphere of heaven on high. Prayer is the heart's offering towards God, the soul's sacrifice, the only effectual death of pride and selfishness, the source of humility, the breath of piety, and the life of religion. It maketh—and the want of it marreth—a saint. Prayer engendereth a distinct form of manhood, and the highest. As sympathy with self engendereth a distinct form of manhood, in all its fruits, from the meanest to the most heroical, so sympathy with others engendereth the social form of manhood. As there is a literature of which this heroic work is the chief and crowning work, so there is a literature of a spiritual form, of which prayer is the chief and crowning work.[d]

**4, 5.** (4) **order,** lay out in order: fully present. **arguments,**[a] questionings, and explanations. These may be presented before God with all due humility. (5) **he would answer,** Job feels confident that they would not be such words as he had heard from the friends.

*Sighing for God* (*vv.* 3, 4).—I. The speaker. 1. The awakened sinner; 2. The despairing saint; 3. The penitent backslider. II. His state of mind. 1. A sense of distance; 2. A knowledge of a way of access; 3. An ardent desire of communion in that

**Job's answer**

**he longs to appear before God**

*a* Job xix. 21; Ps. xxii. 4.

*b* "The meaning may more simply be, True, my complaint is very bitter, but it is justified by my affliction."—*Spk. Com.*

*c* Ps. ix. 7, 8.

*a* 3. *A. Gray*, 483; *A. Buchanan*, 11; *J. Spence*, 315. "I have seen persons stand at the door of houses minutes together, tapping with their fingers, while the great knocker had been provided for them. Had they used that they would have saved their fingers and obtained a much speedier response. This is like many persons in prayer. Instead of praying with the promises and the Spirit, they pray in their own feeble strength, and hence they pray amiss."—*John Bate*

*d Ed. Irving.*

**he would then frame his plea carefully**

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way; 4. An humble hope of acceptance. III. The sources of his arguments. From—1 The character of God; 2. His promise; 3. His past kindness to ourselves; 4. The work of His Son.[b]

*Prayer inspired by God.*—

It is God prompts, inspires, and answers prayer;
Not sin, nor yet repentance, which avails:
And none can truly worship but who have
The earnest of their glory from on high—
God's nature in them. The world cannot worship.
And whether the lip speak, or in inspired
Silence we clasp our hearts as a shut book
Of song unsung, the silence and the speech
Is each His; and as coming from and going
To Him, is worthy of Him and His love.
Prayer is the spirit speaking truth to Truth;
The expiration of the thing inspired.
Above the battling rock storm of this world
Lies heaven's great calm, through which, as through a bell,
Tolleth the tongue of God, eternally
Calling to worship. Whoso hears that tongue
Worships. The Spirit enters with the sound,
Preaching the one and universal word,
The God-word, which is spirit, life, and light;
The written word to one race, the unwrit
Revealment to the thousand peopled world.
The ear which hears is pre-attuned in heaven,
The eye which sees prevision hath ere birth.
But the just future shall to many give
Gifts which the partial present doles to few;
To all the glory of obeying God.[c]

**6, 7.** (6) **will he plead,** or, do I wish that He would contend against me as an enemy with His omnipotence? **he would,** or, I only wish that He would attend to me as a patient judge.[a] Some trans. "Nay, even He will not impute aught to me."[b] Others, "No, indeed, He will only regard me."[c] Or, He would give heed to me, affording a gracious and impartial hearing to my case.[d] (7) **there,** right before His tribunal; or, *then*, if He give me a hearing. **delivered,** acquitted at once, so clear is my case.[e]

*The question of fear and the answer of faith* (*v.* 6).—I. The inquiry of fear. 1. A true penitent has a right idea of many of God's attributes; 2. He feels that every attribute of God is against him as a sinner; 3. He feels that the exercise of power against him would be just. II. The reply of faith. 1. The faithful soul has a right view of God in all respects; 2. He does not tremble at the thought of God's power; he now sees it exercised in his behalf.[f]

*The goodness of God.*—Divine goodness was in all ages sending letters of advice and counsel from heaven, till the canon of Scripture was closed. It was goodness that revealed anything of His will after the fall; it was a further degree of goodness that He would add more cubits to its stature; and before He would lay aside His pencil, it grew up into that bulk wherein we have it; and His goodness is further seen in its preservation; He hath triumphed over the powers that opposed it. He hath maintained it against the blasts of hell, and spread it in all languages against the obstruction of men and devils.[g]

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a Is. i. 18, xliii. 26; Da. ix. 18, 19. *vv.* 3—4. *Dr. I. Watts.* i 64; *J. Summerfield*, 221.

b *G. Brooks.* "When the mouth prayeth, man heareth; when the heart, God heareth. Every good prayer knocketh at heaven for a blessing, but an importunate prayer pierceth it (though hard as brass), and makes a way for itself into the ears of the Almighty. And as it ascends lightly up, carried with the wings of faith, so it comes ever laden down again upon our heads. In my prayers, my thoughts shall not be guided by my words, but my words shall follow my thoughts."—*Bp. Hall.*

c *Bailey.*

**he has confidence in the great mercy of God**

a "Job appeals fr. their rash censure to the justice and omniscience of the Most High."—*Wordsworth.*

b *Spk. Com.*

c *Delitzsch.*

d *Robinson.*

e "There is too much self-confidence in these assertions, as Job afterwards owns, ch. xl. 4, xlii. 6."—*Wordsworth.*

f *C. H. Spurgeon.*

g *Charnock.*

**8—10.** (8) **forward**, to the east.[a] **not there**, in such sense that Job could trace, and apprehend His dealings.[b] **backward**, to the west. (9) **left hand**, to the north. **work**, "God's glorious *works* are esp. seen in the N. region of the sky by one in the N. hemisphere."[c] **hideth himself**,[d] in the unexplored south. "then regarded as uninhabitable through great heat." (10) **the way**, marg. *that is with me*; i.e. which I walk in:[e] all my experience and conduct in this affliction. **as gold**, from the refiner's fire.[f]

*Confidence* (*v.* 10).—"He knoweth," etc.—I. For He directed me. II. He has visited me. III. Although it is almost trackless. IV. Although I have sometimes doubted it. V. So I conclude He will never abandon me. VI. So I do not mind its thorns. VII. Therefore I must reach home. (1) Let Christians take the text as a cordial; (2) Let backsliders regard it as a beacon; (3) Let sinners listen to it as an alarm bell.—*The upright man's vindication.*—Intro. by refer. to trials of Job. Among the most painful were the suspicions of men. They thought him very sinful because he suffered so much. Job's faith did not fail. He knew the root of the matter was found in him. Earthly friends might blame: he thought of God. Job was sure that God knew his way. So is every Christian. I. What are his reasons for this belief? 1. God had permitted it: "good men's steps ordered;" 2. Although greatly tried, he had Divine comfort in his heart; 3. God knows and sees the whole way; 4. The promises are his, and God's faithfulness not dependent on his faith: "though we believe not," etc. II. What are the lessons he draws from all this belief? 1. Not to mind the ruggedness of the road; 2. The end—heaven—must be safely reached. Learn:—(1) If you are good, prayerful, etc., and have trials, never fear: God knows. Let your thought be "Even so, Father;" (2) If you are still in the broad road, God knows the way: "Thou God seest me." He is willing to lead you out of the wrong way into the right, and save you.[g]

*The care of God.*—In the days of the Reformation, Brentius, of Würtemburg, being pursued by persecuting soldiers, escaped into a hay-loft, and concealed himself under the hay. The soldiers entered the place, and ran their bayonets up through the hay, without detecting him. Every day, for fourteen days, a hen laid an egg in the hay, which was his only means of support. Then the supply ceased, which he took as an intimation of Providence that it would now be safe to come out from his concealment. He found that the soldiers had just left the town; and he was able to seek a place of safety.

**11, 12.** (11) **foot hath held**,[a] kept to; followed faithfully. **his way**, the way of His will. **not declined**, turned aside.[b] (12) **gone back**, in wilful neglect, or disobedience. Job asserts sincerity, but not perfection. **esteemed**, lit. *hid, laid up*.[c] **necessary food**, Heb. *chók*, a statute, or decree. "That which is appointed for me." Prob. meaning, *my own law*,[d] the will of the natural man.

*The course of the good man* (*v.* 12).—I. As to its direction, it is straight onward. He does not go back. Some turn aside. Job xviii. 7; Ps. cxxv. 5; Pr. iv. 18. Others cease to walk on. Heb. x. 38. II. As to its rule. The Word of God.[e]—*Job's love of the Word of God.*—We regard these words—I. As an honour to Job.

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**the invisible God observes our ways**

*a* "The Orientals in designating the cardinal points, stood with their faces to the sun-rising."—*Wordsworth.*

*b* "It should be observed that Job's conviction of God's Absolute Presence comes out most strongly when he feels that he cannot discern Him."—*Spk. Com.*

*c Fausset*

*d* Job xxxiv. 29; Is. xlv. 15.

*e* "'Though I know not the way that He takes, yet He knows the way that I take."—*Matt. Henry.*

*f* Ps. xii. 6; Pr. xxvii. 21; Mal. iii. 3; Ja. i. 12.

*g Hive.*

vv. 8—10. *J. H. Stewart*, iii. 67.

*v.* 10. *Bp. Horne*, iv. 201; *S. Lavington*, i. 251.

**Job asserts his innocence**

*a* "The feet of Easterns, not being covered with shoes in early childhood, are very tenacious of their hold."—*Carey.*

*b* Ps. xliv. 18, cxxv. 5; 1 Th. ii. 10.

*c* Ps. cxix. 11.

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We know not what sacred records Job possessed. In respect to what he had he esteemed them more than his daily food. 1. His desire after them was more ardent; 2. His delight in them was more exquisite; 3. His refreshment from them was more abiding. II. As a reproach to us. 1. How much fuller a revelation of God's will do we possess! 2. How low is the esteem in which it is held by us. Application:—Redeem, then, the time which you have lost for the attainment of Divine knowledge.[f]

*Note on v.* 15.—When a man follows another in a path so closely as almost to touch the feet of him who goes before, it is said, "His feet hath laid hold of his steps," intimating that the men are so near to each other that the feet of him who follows, like unto the fingers of a man's hands, seize the feet of him who goes before. Thus the devoted disciple of a gooroo, or the man who closely pursues another, is said to take hold of the steps of him who goes before. Perhaps the figure may be taken from the great adroitness that the natives of the East have in seizing hold of anything with their toes! See a man walking along the road: he sees something which he wishes to pick up; but he does not stoop, as an Englishman. No; he takes it up between his first and second toes. Look at tailors, shoemakers, or sailors: when they want to twist a cord they do not tie it to a nail, or ask another person to take hold. No; they make one end fast to the great toe, and perform the other operation with the hands. But the most remarkable illustration of this practice was in the case of Alypulle, the Kandian chief, who was beheaded near Kandy. When he arrived at the place where he was to be executed, he looked around for some time for a small shrub; and on seeing one he seized it with his toes, in order to be firm while the executioner did his office.[g]

**13, 14.** (13) **in one,** omit the inserted word *mind.* Unchangeable. "Or it may mean that God stands aloof, supreme by Himself, and will not admit me or any one else to debate with Him."[a] **soul desireth,** altogether beyond man's understanding. (14) **thing appointed,** decree, as *v.* 12. **many such,** sovereign and inscrutable dealings with His creatures.

*Benevolence of God in creation.*—The benevolence of our great Creator is chanted even by things unpleasant to the ear. "The nuptial song of reptiles," says Kirby, "is not, like that of birds, the delight of every heart; but it is rather calculated to disturb and horrify than to still the soul. The hiss of serpents, the croaking of frogs and toads, the moaning of turtles, the bellowing of crocodiles and alligators, form their gamut of discords." Here also, we may read beneficent design. Birds are the companions of man in the lawn and forest, in his solitary walks, amidst his rural labours, and around the home of his domestic enjoyments. They are, therefore, framed beautiful to the eye, and pleasing to the ear; but of the reptile tribes, some are his formidable enemies, and none were ever intended to be his associates. They shun cultivation, and inhabit unfrequented marshes or gloomy wilds. Their harsh notes and ungainly or disgusting forms serve therefore to warn him of danger, or to turn his steps to places more fit for his habitation.[b]

**15—17.** (15) **his presence,**[a] manifestly with him, but so little understood. (16) **soft,**[b] weak, crushed; unnerves me; soft with fear and dismay; **hath melted my courage. troubleth,**

*d* "Job's own natural desires, as contrasted with God's law."—*Delitzsch.*

Ro. vii. 23.

*e Study,* 1873.

*f C. Simeon, M.A.*

"The carpenter's gimblet makes but a small hole, but it enables him to drive a great nail. May we not here see a representation of those minor departures from the truth which prepare the minds of men for grievous errors, and of those thoughts of sin which open a way for the worst of crimes! Beware, then, of Satan's gimblet."—*Spurgeon.*

*g Roberts.*

**God's decree is immutable**

*a Wordsworth.*

Ps. cxv. 3.

*v.* 13. *T. Dwight,* **1.** 212.

"In the ocean we see the wisdom of God in providing such a purifying and preserving element in nature, and the goodness of God in providing such an article as salt for the healthful use of His creatures."—*John Bate.*

*b H. Duncan's Sac. Philos. of the Seasons.*

**the thought of God's greatness inspires fear**

*a* "God's decrees, imposs. to be resisted, and leav-

fills me with terror. (17) **darkness**, of these woes: *see* ch. iii. 10. *Lit.* "Not cut off fr. before the face of the darkness." **covered the darkness**, preserving me from this great sorrow.[c]

*God's power over the heart* (*v.* 16).—I. As the God of nature. 1. Literally; 2. Figuratively. II. As the God of providence. 1. By pecuniary losses; 2. Bereavements; 3. Personal afflictions. III. As the God of grace. 1. The means employed to effect it; 2. Its various stages and degrees: sense of fear, of sorrow, of mercy, of love; 3. Its effects. IV. As the God of justice. Address—(1) The impenitent; (2) Those who mourn; (3) Those who believe.[d]

*A change of heart is God's work.*—A little boy once said, "How hard it is to do right!" and so hard did he find it that after a while he added, "It's of no use trying." But he was a boy who had learnt to read and understand the Bible, and one day he thought to himself, "Why, I have been trying to change myself all this time, and here I read that only God can change me. How foolish I have been not to ask Him."[e]

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ing us in the dark as to what may come next, are calculated to fill the mind with holy awe."—*Barnes.*

*b* Ps. xxii. 14.

*c Ewald, etc.*, propose another rendering of this verse, "I am not reduced to silence by the darkness of my affliction, or by my own countenance, wh darkness covereth, but it is God who is my adversary, and confounds me."

*d Delta in* 400 *Sketches.*

*e S. G. Green.*

## *CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FOURTH.*

**1—4.** (1) **not hidden**, or *kept; laid up.* "Why are not stated seasons reserved by the Almighty for the punishment of the wicked?"[a] **days**,[b] of inflicting punishment. (2) **some**, of the wicked. Job gives instances of the wicked doing the worst deeds with seeming impunity. **landmarks**,[c] boundaries, often only large stones, marking off different pastures. **feed**, *them;* as if they were their own property. (3) **for a pledge**, they distrain the ass of the orphan and the ox of the widow for debt. (4) **out of the way**, compelling them to keep out of sight for fear of their violence.[d]

**the wicked conduct of some who profess to know God**

*a Wordsworth.* "Wherefore are not doom days kept by the Almighty, so that His offenders may eye His periods?"—*Good.*

*b* "'Days of the Lord' invariably mean the occasions on wh. God manifests Himself in righteousness."—*Spk. Com.* Is. ii. 12, xiii. 6; Joel i. 15; Am. v. 18.

*c* De. xix. 14, xxvii. 17; Pr. xxii. 28, xxiii. 10. "As this was so flagrant an offence, the expression became proverbial to designate unprincipled conduct."—*Ayre.*

*d* Lu. v. 6.

*e i. Sydney Smith*, 195 (1846).

*e Dr. Robinson.*

*f Parton.*

*Homiletic hints.*—I. That stated times of judgment, or Divine court-days for trying men's actions, are manifestly not held. II. Times for the visible infliction of punishment on the wicked not seen by the godly in this life. From the verse, observe—(1) Times, in the sense of events, not hidden from the Almighty; (2) Times for the accomplishment of future events not hidden from God; (3) Sufficient to describe the godly as those who know God; (4) God's friends made acquainted with His purposes and procedure in the world.[e]

*The ass in the East* (*v.* 3).—How various and important are the services which this humble creature renders to his master! He serves him for riding, for bearing his burdens, drawing the plough, treading the grain into the flooded soil, turning the millstone; and to all these services the female adds the nutritious beverage of her milk. To the poor man, therefore, a single ass might prove an invaluable treasure. In many cases it was the principal means of support to himself and his family; a circumstance which accounts for the energetic language respecting this animal in some passages of Scripture. To "drive away the ass of the fatherless," Job denounces as a deed of atrocity which none but a proud and unfeeling oppressor could be guilty of perpetrating.[f]

**they are wilful as wild asses**

**5—8.** (5) **wild asses**,[a] *onagri*, difficult to break in; living free on the *steppe*, and in the desert; they resemble the poor who

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*a* Comp. Job xxx. 5—7. Also this sentence taken fr. Eccles. xiii. 19. "As the wild ass is the lion's prey, so the rich eat up the poor."

*b* "Mixed provender, made up of various kinds of grain, as of barley, vetches, etc., prepared for cattle."—*Barnes.*

*c* "All Bedouins sleep naked at night: when asked why they do this, since at night they are often attacked by enemies, they answer, that it is an old custom. Many perish in cold seasons."—*Wetzstein*

*d Good.*

*e Burder.*

**they oppress the orphan and the poor with impunity**

*a* Le. xxv. 39, 40.

*b* "Their masters deny them what, according to De. xxv. 4, should not be withheld even from the beasts."—*Delitzsch.*

*c* The same word *tiphlath*, by a change of the vowel points, means *prayer*, and this would give good sense in the text. *v.* 12. *A. B. Evans, Lec.* 157.

*d Roberts.*

**such men love the darkness rather than the light**

*a* Pr. iv. 19; Jno. iii. 19, 20; Ja. iv. 17.

*b* Pr. x. 8.

are driven from their homes by violence, and compelled to become marauding robber bands. **yieldeth food**, but by plunder, not by work. (6) **corn**, fodder,[b] mixed fodder. **in the field**, into the tilled land they make incursions. **gather**, *glean*. **of the wicked**, of their oppressors: not allowed to share in the vintage, they can only glean the refuse. (7) **cause**, *etc.*, better, they pass the night naked.[c] (8) **embrace**, *etc.*, take refuge under a projecting rock.

*The true Rock and its shelter.*—I. As sinners men are by nature in the condition of the persons here referred to—exposed to a storm. II. Men in themselves are without a shelter. III. Such a shelter is provided in Christ; affords perfect safety to the soul that trusts in Him; is sufficient to receive and shelter all who betake themselves to Him; is comfortable and well replenished; is accessible to all: all are welcome to its shelter. IV. This rock is to be embraced.

*Note on v.* 5.—The passage refers, evidently, not to the proud and haughty tyrants themselves, but to the oppressed and needy wretches, the Bedouins and other plundering tribes, whom their extortion and violence had driven from society, and compelled in a body to seek for subsistence by public robbery and pillage. In this sense the description is admirably forcible and characteristic.[d] —*Note on v.* 8.—This exactly agrees with what Niebuhr says of the modern wandering Arabs near Mount Sinai: "Those who cannot afford a tent spread out a cloth upon four or six stakes; and others spread their cloth near a tree, or endeavour to shelter themselves from the heat and the rain, in the cavities of the rocks."[e]

**9—12.** (9) **they**, reverting to the violent man and usurer, whose wickedness seems unrecognised (*v.* 4). **pluck**, *etc.*, seize the very infants to sell, or make slaves of. **a pledge**, everything he has for a pledge, or himself;[a] the next *v.* indicates that special reference is to the poor man's *garment*. (10) **take . . sheaf**, making him work without food, regardless of his hunger.[b] (11) **suffer thirst**, while making abundance of oil and wine for their oppressors. (12) **groan**, under this violent and wicked treatment. **city**, where public opinion should repress such cruelty. **folly**, or wickedness.[c]

*Note on v.* 9.—It used to be said of the cruel king of Kandy, that he would not allow the infant to suck its mother's breast. Of a wicked woman it is said, "She will not allow her own child to suck her." "O the savage husband! he snatches the child from his wife's breast."[d]

**13—15.** (13) **rebel**, *etc.*,[a] a yet more wicked class, whose wrong-doing seems to go unpunished. Such as wilfully ignore God's claims, and oppose themselves to His will. (14) **with the light**,[b] *i.e.* at early dawn, while still dark; the time when travellers set out, and the poor man goes to his work. **night . . thief**, he who steals takes advantage of the *night*; he who would rob and murder of the *dawn*. (15) **twilight**, deep gloom of eventide. **disguiseth**, by covering it with a thick veil.

*Rebelling against the light*—I. Who they are that are obnoxious to this charge. Those who rebel—1. Against the light of day; 2. Against the light of conscience; 3. Against the light of revelation. II. How far we ourselves are implicated in it. 1. Our indulgence in secret sins; 2. Our neglect of acknowledged duties.

Behold, then—(1) How amazing has been the forbearance of God! (2) What a mercy is it that the light is yet continued! (3) How thankful should we be if conscience have in any measure its proper influence upon us![c]

*Light rejected.*—I once happened to be on a visit to a great castle situate on the top of a hill. There was a steep cliff, at the bottom of which was a rapid river. Late one night, there was a person anxious to get home from that castle, in the midst of a thunderstorm. The night was blackness itself. The woman was asked to stop till the storm was over, but she declined: next they begged her to take a lantern, that she might be able to keep upon the road from the castle to her home. She said she did not require a lantern, but could do very well without one. She went. Perhaps she was frightened by the storm (I know not the cause), but in the midst of the darkness she wandered from the path, and fell over the cliff: the next day that swollen river washed to the shore the poor lifeless body of this foolish woman.[d]

**16, 17.** (16) **dig through,** this could be done bec. the house floors are made of a thick raised layer of mud.[a] **marked,**[b] *etc.*, more correctly. *by day they fasten themselves in* their houses, as if fearing the light. (17) **as the shadow,** because of their fear of being discovered. **know,** *etc.*, or they know, are familiar with, the terrors of the shadow of death, *i.e.* the deepest darkness; they quite prefer it to the light.

*Housebreaking in India.*—Early one morning I heard that there had been a robbery in the Indian village where I had slept. I went to the house to inquire about it, expecting to see a picked lock or broken shutter; but instead of this, I saw a hole which had been dug through the wall of the house, which strikingly reminded me of the expression in the above passage. I suppose that every Sunday-school child knows that bricks are made of clay, and in this country are burnt with fire; but in very hot countries they are often made of common earth, not clay, and dried by the sun. This is done to save expense. I built a house with bricks of this kind, and lived in it for several years. Such a house does very well when the roof is tight, and no water is allowed to get to the walls, which are easily destroyed if allowed to get wet. The thieves know that very well, and so, when they determine to break into a house of that kind, they just soften part of the wall with water, and then, with any piece of stick, they can dig a hole through large enough to get in, and so quietly as not to disturb the sleepers.[d]

**18–20.** (18) **swift,** *etc.*, light upon the surface of the water; he swiftly passes, as a floating thing, without sign of judicial sentence.[a] **their portion,** that of his descendants; but this does not hurt him who is peacefully in the grave. **cursed . . he beholdeth not,** his place knows him no more. He feels nothing of it. (19) **snow waters,** wh. are quickly licked up by burning heat: they just fade away.[b] **the grave,** *Sheol*, like a burning sun. (20) **womb,** fig. for his mother. **broken as a tree,** fig. of sudden death: tree struck by lightning, or broken by wind.[d]

*Note on v.* 19.—Literally, "ransack or plunder them." The reference is to those dykes, tanks, or reservoirs of water, which, in Eastern countries, are always carefully filled during the periodical exudations of the large rivers, as the Nile, Indus, and Ganges,

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"He that hides a dark soul, and foul thoughts, benighted walks under the mid-day sun; himself is his own dungeon."—*Milton.*

c *C. Simeon, M.A.*

"Truth is as impossible to be soiled by any outward touch as the sunbeam."—*Milton*

d *Bp. Villiers.*

**the light of day fills the violent with fear**

a "In the East, nearly all the houses are made of unburnt brick, and there is little difficulty in making a hole in the wall large enough to admit the human body."—*Barnes.*

b The word used means *to seal*, to *seal up*, hence the idea of shutting up, or making fast.

c Je. ii. 26.

d *Journal of a Missionary.*

**the wicked shall pass away and be forgotten**

a Some think Job here ironically takes up the language of the friends; but it is better to keep the idea running through Job's speech, that the wicked live and die peacefully, without evidently coming under Divine judgments.

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Job ix. 26; Ho. x. 7.

*b* "Melted snow, as contrasted with the living fountain, quickly dries up in the sunburnt sand, not leaving a trace behind."—*Barnes.*

*d* Pr. x. 7; Ecc. viii. 10; Is. xxvi. 14.

*e Good.*

**he omits to do good even to the widow**

*a* "Instead of doing justice to the defenceless, he scoffs at their entreaties; his one object is to raise men of might to power, to surround himself with strong and unscrupulous partisans."—*Spk. Com.*

*b* He preserveth the mighty by His strength, such an one riseth again, though he despaired of life.

*c* Ps. x. 14; Je. xvi. 17, xxxii. 19; Re. ii. 1, 2.

*d Dr. Robinson.*

*e Roberts.*

**Job challenges a refutation of his words**

*a* "Gathered up and carried off; tied together like a sheaf, and carried away."—*Wordsworth.*

*b* "In E. the custom is to cut off the ears of grain; they do not cut it near the root as we do."—*Barnes.*

Is xvii. 5.

and preserved to fertilise the soil by occasional irrigations through the rest of the year, and without which there can be no harvest. So Isa. xxxvi. 16. These exudations were uniformly ascribed, and with great reason, to heavy periodical rains, and sudden thawings of the immense masses of snow deposited in the colder months on the summits of the loftier mountains, and especially of that vast and winding chain of rocks which, under the name of Caucasus and Imaus, runs, in almost every direction from the eastern verge of Europe to the southern extremity of India. The two physical evils here adverted to, therefore are among the severest scourges ever inflicted upon man—the failure of the vintage and of the harvest.[e]

**21—23.** (21) **he evil,** *etc.*, a review of the most painful feature of the oppressor's life. Or a further description of the violent man of high rank.[a] (22) **draweth,** *etc.*, Delitzsch refers this verse to God's dealing with the violent, even restoring him from perilous sickness.[b] **mighty,** the oppressor. **sure of life,** lit. *when he no longer believed in life; i.e.* despaired of it; thought he was on the brink of the grave. (23) **him,** the oppressor. **his eyes,** the eyes of God.[c]

*Homiletic hints* (*vv.* 21—24).—I. Injury done to a fellow-creature; sin marked by God; that sin aggravated when the injury is done to one already in any way afflicted. II. A sin in the sight of God, not only to injure the afflicted and the destitute, but even to withhold our sympathy and aid. III. A high aggravation of sin when we not only do wrong ourselves, but endeavour by our influence to draw others into the same practice. IV. An aggravated sin to abuse God's goodness and forbearance to the practice of evil. V. Sin, though passed over for the present, yet marked for future visitation. VI. The power and pride of the ungodly but of short continuance. VII. Sinners often cut off when their prosperity has reached its highest pitch, like the tops of the ears of corn. VIII. Men spared to ripen either for mercy or judgment.[d]

*Note on v.* 21.—It is considered to be very disgraceful for a married woman not to have children; and the evil treatment they receive from their own husbands and others is most shameful. Nothing can be more common than for a poor woman of that description, when she has given offence to another, to be addressed by the term *malady*, *i.e.* barren. "Go, barren one, get out of my sight." "*Chee!* she cannot have a child."[e]

**24, 25.** (24) **but are gone,** *i.e.* right from their exalted positions the wicked pass away, without suffering any special calamities. Read, "after a little while they are gone." **as all other,**[a] like all mankind. **as the tops,** the natural end of the harvest field is to have the ears cut off,[b] and gathered in: so the death of the wicked is not premature or violent, but orderly and natural. (25) **liar,** in sense of giving a false description of the life, the lot, and the death of the wicked.

*Note on v.* 24.—Wicked men and tyrants may be prosperous for a season, but they will eventually be like the long stubble, having had the ears lopped off. This alludes to the custom in the East, *of taking off the ears of the corn*, and leaving the straw, as before, standing on the ground. The grain called *kurrakan* is gathered by simply taking off the ears; and rice, where the water still

remains in the fields, is gathered in the same way. The proud oppressor then, in the end, shall be like the long straw standing in its place, having "the ears" cut off, and carried away.[c]

B.C. *cir.* 1520.

*c Roberts.*

## *CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FIFTH.*

**Bildad's reply**

**1—3.** (1) **Bildad,**[a] comp. prev. speeches, ch. viii., xviii. (2) **dominion and fear,** power and terror, or terror inspiring power. **high places,**[b] heaven. He who makes peace in heaven by His power, surely will not permit man to contend with Him. (3) **armies,** angels: those who wait to do His will. Applies to all Div. agencies. God *can* punish the wicked. Fig. is taken from the *stars,* which shine in the light of the sun.[c]

*Pretended fellowship with God.*—The word "*Fakir*" comes from an Arabic word, *fakhar,* meaning poor. It was first of all given to a number of men who formed themselves into what was called an "Order," and whose peculiarities were a kind of half-respectable beggary and an over-abundance of religious observance. They seem indeed to have been willing to put themselves to some considerable inconvenience rather than do anything for their living. This refers more especially to the fakirs of India and the country round about; the fakirs of Persia and Turkey were a somewhat different kind of men. The origin of Fakirism is not known; it goes farther back than history—which is about equal to saying that there never has been a time, since men and countries have been known, when or where begging impostors have not been. When we hear of them first, they were not, as I said just now, quite so low as they afterwards became and remained. At first they persuaded themselves and other people that they really were intended to be set apart from the ordinary work of life, and to do only special and remarkable things. This one wrong step soon led to many more, and, like other people who do nothing, they began to assert very high and great claims, professing themselves to be saints, "united with God," and so on. Never having done any work, they got out of sympathy with it, and went about in dirty rags. Many people believed all they said, and treated them as people to be regarded with the greatest reverence. Their whole story has been one of getting worse and worse. It is said that at the present time there are in the East Indies about three millions of them. They go on pilgrimages in large numbers; place as ornaments upon their bodies such hideous things as human bones and skins of serpents; besmear themselves with dirt; make terrible noises when passing through villages; and in their frenzy often kill those who do not "believe" in them. These little bits of history all point the same moral—which is, that people cannot improve upon their duty in and to the world, and that duty is, to take a share of its work, and in this as well as other ways do the best you can for your neighbours."[d]

*a* "Here B. leaves unnoticed the question raised by Job, and simply repeats two commonplaces. God is omnipotent. Man is naturally unclean."—*Spk. Com.*

*b* Eph. i. 20, 21.

*c* Is. xl. 26; Je. xxxi. 35; Da. vii. 10; Mat. xxvi. 53; Re. v. 11.

As the mother takes the newborn babe, that can do nothing but cry, and folds it in her bosom, there to find its food, its warmth, its raiment, its everything; so God takes needy souls that can only cry out, "God be merciful to me a sinner," and wraps them up, not in official arms, but in the bosom of His love, there to find their food, raiment, their all!

*d Little Folks.*

**man cannot be justified before God**

**4—6.** (4) **can man,** *etc.,* this is only the repetition of truth dwelt on before.[a] Bildad has nothing fresh to say. **clean,** maintain a moral character faultless, and therefore absolutely free from condemnation. This the friends supposed Job to do, and so judged him to have no true humility before God. (5) **shineth**

**all are impure in the sight of God**

*a* Job iv. 17, 18, xv. 14, 16.

*b* "There is a vast

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distance between God and His highest and most glorious creatures—how much more between Him and man, the worm of the dust!"—*Delitzsch.*

c Ps. xxii. 6; Is. xli. 14.

*vv.* 4—6. *A. Roberts*, iv. 1.

"God is a spirit, as man is a spirit. There is no difference as to what may be termed the popular characters of spirit, between the spirit of man, and God, considered as a spirit; for God made man in His own image. But there is one great and radical difference. Human and angelic spirits are finite; God, whom we worship, is Infinite."—*R. Watson.*

"Speak the truth though it displease; speak the truth, though the heathen rage and the people imagine vain things; speak the truth, though, for aught we know, it may be the last word we speak; speak the truth, though it may nail us to the cross, where we shall most resemble Him with this title, the servant of Christ, as His was, the King of the Jews."—*Anthony Farindon.*

d *Bu*

not, with absolute perfection in God's sight.[b] (6) worm, ch. vii. 5.[c]

*Note on v.* 5.—What possible sense can be elicited from this passage, as thus rendered? The original for "dead things" (*rephaim*) properly signifies the *mighty dead*, and is a common denomination of the *dead giants* who died before the flood. The *spirits* of these men are frequently alluded to in the Scriptures, in accordance with the popular modes of belief, as incarcerated in the bowels or cavernous recesses of the earth, having been ingulfed in the waters of the deluge. Here the speaker is descanting, in a sublime and somewhat poetic manner, upon the ubiquity and omnipotence of God. Though seated upon the circle of the heavens, yet His eye penetrates, and His presence visits, the profoundest abysses of the globe, and the spirits of the mighty dead, the tenants of these gloomy mansions, quail and quake before Him. The true import of the original word rendered "formed" is, to *tremble, shake, quake, be put in commotion.* It is, therefore, in fact, but saying, that the regions of the dead are perfectly exposed to the omniscient survey of Jehovah, and that the despairing spirits of those who perished under the overwhelming mass of waters in the days of Noah perpetually quake under the consciousness of His present ire. The ensuing verse is in a similar strain: "Hell (Hades, the invisible world) is naked before Him, and destruction hath no covering." A kindred figurative mode of representation occurs in Isa. xiv. 6, where the approach of the once dreaded king of Babylon to the dreary mansions of the dead is spoken of as exciting commotion among the silent occupants of that nether world. "Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming; it stirreth up the *dead* (rephaim, *the mighty dead*) for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth." We suppose that the New Testament contains two distinct allusions to the subject of the present passage in Job, if not to the passage itself; the first is James ii. 19, "Thou believest there is one God; thou doest well; *the devils also believe and tremble.*" Here the original word for *devils* (daimonia, *demons*) is, as Campbell has shown, the New Testament term for *spirits of dead men*, especially such as were deified and worshipped after death, the heroes or demigods of antiquity. This view of the subject brings the two passages into very near accordance with each other. The import of both is, that the spirits of these mighty dead tremble in awe before the most high God. The other occurs 1 Pet. iii. 19, 20, "By which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison, which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is to say, eight souls, were saved by water." Christ, speaking by His Spirit through Noah, and perhaps other good men living before the flood, preached to those ancient sinners, "which were of old, men of renown," but whose spirits, from their having proved disobedient and incorrigible, are now confined in the gloomy abodes of the under world, as in a prison from which there is no escape.[d]

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## *CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SIXTH.*

**1—4.** (1) **answered**, summing up the whole controversy. (2) **without power**, or the *no power*: a negative form. They had sought to make Job feel his weakness, but they had not helped him in it.[a] (3) **counselled**, since they had assumed to be his teachers. **thing as it is**, the essence of the matter: the thing fully. They had presented only some *sides* of truth.[b] (4) **to whom . . words?** for whom are now instructions meant? **spirit**, or breath. Intimating that Bildad had only repeated the sentiments of Eliphaz;[c] not his own, and not inspired by God.

*Note on v.* 6.—These words may admonish us to labour for humility, to think basely of ourselves, and to be lowly in our own eyes, and so shall we be more acceptable to God. Our Saviour Christ hath ever been lovingly affected towards those that were of a humble mind. When the good centurion had such a base conceit of himself that he thought not himself worthy that Christ should come under his roof, oh! how highly our Saviour commendeth him! The deeper the well is, the sweeter the water: so the more humble any man is in his own conceit, the more acceptable he is to God. And as the sun, the higher he is in the firmament, the shorter shadows he maketh, so virtue and grace, the higher and more eminent it is, the less ostentation it maketh.[d]

**5—8.** (5) **dead**, *etc.*, Job gives a description of God's rule, tracing it through every department of creation, so showing that he is not wanting either in a recognition or reverence of God the Almighty ruler."[a] Not *dead things*, but the dead; the shades, Heb. *Rephaim*,[b] extinct race of giants; generally, *the dead*. **under the waters**, Sheol being conceived as under the ocean. Yet God's power reaches them. The expression, "*are formed*," should be "*are put in pain*." (6) **hell**, Ge. xxxvii. 35. **naked**, *i.e.* fully revealed. **destruction**, Heb. *Abaddon*.[c] The abode of destruction. **no covering**, hiding it from God. (7) **north**,[d] northern part of the heavens. **hangeth**, *etc.*,[e] indicating Job's apprehension of *roundness* of the earth. (8) **not rent**, without the clouds being rent.[f]

*Note on v.* 6.—God at any time can tell thee what plots are hatching there against thee. Consider Satan as he is God's creature, so God cannot but know him. He that makes the watch cannot but know every pin in it. He formed this crooked serpent, though not the crookedness of this serpent; and though Satan's way in tempting be as wonderful as the way of a serpent upon a rock, yet God traceth him, yea, knows all his thoughts together. "Hell itself is naked before Him," and the destroyer hath no covering.[g]

**9 11.** (9) **holdeth back**, covereth, enshroudeth[a] (Ps. xviii. 11). (10) **day . . end**,[b] the horizon is meant, which divides the lighted half of the world from the dark half. (11) **pillars of heaven**, mountains, poetically are so called.[c] **reproof**, such the poet regards the *tempest* as being.[d]

*Ancient cosmical theories.*—Although it was left for later times and the perfection of scientific calculation to prove this state-

**Job's answer**

**he reproves Bildad's want of charity**

*a* "The verse is sarcastical. Bildad has come as a friend and comforter, and were these impertinent and irrelevant generalities of his speech all he could do?"—*Barnes.*

*b* "Job intimates that he can go beyond them in the glorification of God. He extends his views to the *future* and *unseen*."—*Wordsworth.*

*c* Job iv. 17—19, xv. 14—16.

*d C. Richardson*, 1612.

**admits the power of God to be unsearchable**

*a De'itzsch.*

*b* Chaldee and Syriac render, *giants.*

*c* Re. ix. 11.

*d* Some think the highest part of the earth is meant. — So *Ewald.*

Is. xl. 22.

*e* Ps. xxiv. 1, 2.

*f* Pr. xxx. 4; Ps. cxxxv. 7; Je. x. 13.

rr. 5—7. *Alex. Pirie, Crit. Obs.* iii.

*g Gurnall.*

**he gives instances of that power**

*a* "Like a mighty monarch, God withdraws His throne into the deep recess; and a

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curtain of mysterious darkness hangs before it." —*Wordsworth.*

[a] Ex. xx. 21, xxxiii. 20—23; Ps. xcvii. 2.

[b] "He hath drawn a circular boundary upon the waters with exact proportion of light and darkness."—*Robinson.*

See Ge. i. 1—10.

[c] Na. i. 5; Hab. iii. 10.

[d] "To the poet's ear the prolonged echoes of the thunder are the voices of the mountains expressing their consternation at the rebuke of God."—*Spk. Com.*

*v.* 9. *W. Oram,* 47.

[e] *W. R. C.*

ment, yet ages prior to Thales the Chaldean, or Ptolemy the Alexandrian, this fact was as above declared by revelation to the patriarch Job. A necessary revelation, for it must not be regarded as a natural idea. The cosmical theory of ancient astronomers generally was that the earth had a discoid form, and either floated upon the ocean or was upheld by a definite support. Analogous expressions will instantly occur to the recollection of every student in the older Greek poetry. (See Trans-Syro-Egyptian Society, 1868.) And such was, indeed, the received opinion in the seventeenth century, when the sovereign pontiff Urban VIII., upon the strength of a mistranslation in the Vulgate, "Terra stat," persecuted Galileo Galilei for maintaining a contrary opinion. Such also was to a great extent the belief of the Hindus, who asserted that the earth was borne up by an elephant, which again was supported by a tortoise. This, again, according to some, stood upon a serpent, but upon what this last creature was sustained they did not venture to determine. A similar belief, with a little variation in the arrangement of the animals, was also entertained by the Buddhists of Japan and China. Traces of the myth exist in the Talmud, and its descendant the Koran. The Scandinavian Sagas repeated and modified still the same idea. Despite these opinions there yet exist indications that when once the actual condition of the Cosmos was revealed it became a scientific fact too wonderful to be wholly obscured or lost sight of; and hence it is that, like the sudden flashes of sunlight during an eclipse, here and there, among the traditions of all the ancient mythologies, glimpses of physical truth shine forth amidst metaphysical absurdities by which they are enclouded. To quote but one passage which has given rise to these reflections, what can be a closer parallel with the sacred text than the following extract from the Parsee Zendavesta, in which Zarathrusta (Zoroaster), addressing the Deity, inquires, "Who upholds the earth and the unsupported (skies) so that they fall not? who the waters and the trees? who has united swiftness with the winds? who, O Mazda (the Supreme Being), is the creator of mankind? That will I ask thee; tell thou me, O Ahura (Mazda)." Compare also Isa. xl. 12, 26.[e]

**and these are only parts of God's ways**

**12—14.** (12) **divideth,** *stirreth up;* agitates.[a] **proud,** Heb. *rahab* (ch. ix. 13). "The power of evil represented by the monsters of the deep, huge saurian forms destroyed in some age of cosmic convulsions."[b] (13) **spirit,** breath, putting forth of His power. **garnished,** *etc.*, with blue, with cloud, with stars. Reference here, however, is to *calm*, succeeding storm. **crooked serpent,** a northern constellation was known as Draco, the dragon.[c] (14) **parts,** borders, ends, outskirts. **portion,**[d] better, *whisper:* contrasting with *thunder.*

*The depths of God's ways* (*v.* 14).—I. Proofs of the doctrine that God's ways are deep. In—1. Works of nature; 2. Conduct of providence; 3. Mysteries of religion; 4. Dealings with the Church. II. Reasons why so small a part of His ways are revealed. 1. His sovereignty and our dependence; 2. Disproportion between His knowledge and ours; 3. Prejudices which obscure our sight; 4. We walk by faith; 5. Contrast between present and future economy. Application:—(1) Ignorance should inspire reverence; (2) We should be cautious in judging of God's works; (3) We should acquiesce in the mysteries of revelation.[e]

[a] "By His power He scourgeth the sea. By His wisdom He bindeth up its pride."—*Herder.*
"By His power the sea suddenly becomes tempestuous."—*Luther.*

[b] *Spk. Com.*

[c] "The Zodiac, with its twelve signs or constellations, was anciently represented as a serpent with its tail in its mouth."—*Robinson.*

*Parts of His way.*—God often lets His people reach the shore as on the planks of a shipwrecked vessel. He deprives us of the cisterns, in order to make us drink out of the fountains of waters. He frequently takes away our supports, not that we may fall to the ground, but that He may Himself become our rod and staff. The embarrassments of His people are only the festive scaffoldings on which His might, His faithfulness, and His mercy celebrate their triumphs.*f*

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*d* "What a whisper o' a word do we hear!" — *Revised Eng. Bible.*

*e Henri Chatelaine.*

*f Krummacher.*

## *CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SEVENTH.*

**1—4.** (1) **parable,**[a] poetic discourse, in wh. truth is concisely and figuratively expressed. (2) **taken away,** put aside, not allowing me to plead. **judgment,** plea for trial; right of defence. **vexed,** Heb. *made my soul bitter;*[b] sorely saddened me. (3) **spirit of God,** breath of God, as Ge. ii. 7: fig. for *as long as I live.* (4) **wickedness,** which a mere feigned utterance of penitence,[c] such as the friends desired, would be. Job would honour God by *integrity.*[d]

*Righteousness.*—One day, as I was passing into the field, and that too with some dashes on my conscience, fearing lest yet all was not right, suddenly this sentence fell upon my soul. "Thy righteousness is in heaven," and methought withal that I saw with the eyes of my soul Jesus Christ at God's right hand. There. I say, was my righteousness, so that wherever I was or whatever I was doing, God could not say of me, "He wants my righteousness;" for that was just before Him. I also saw, moreover, that it was not my good frame of heart that made my righteousness better, nor yet my bad frame that made my righteousness worse; for my righteousness was Jesus Christ Himself; the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."[e]

**Job's protestation of sincerity**

*a* "Applied in E. to a figurative sententious embodiment of wisdom in poetic form."—*Fausset.*

*b* Ru. i. 20.

*c* "In falsely, and contrary to my conscience, admitting myself to have been a secret and guilty transgressor." — *Robinson.*

*d* Ps. xxv. 21.

*e Bunyan.*

**5, 6.** (5) **justify you,** by admitting that your assumptions are correct. **integrity,** wholeness; moral soundness; sincerity.[a] (6) **righteousness,** not absolute, or in evangelical sense, but innocence of the charges you make. **heart . . live,** better, "My heart reproacheth not one of my days."

*Self-reproach.*—Let us consider—I. The proper office of conscience. It is twofold. 1. To judge of what is past; 2. To direct what is to come. II. Our duty in respect to it. 1. To consult its record; 2. To venerate its testimony; 3. To obey its dictates; 4. To get it enlightened and rectified. Then—(1) Guard against a guilty conscience; (2) A partial and deluded conscience; (3) An over-confident and unfeeling conscience.[b]

*Imputed righteousness.*—All colours are wrapped up in the sunlight, which, as is well known, may be seen resolved into its elementary colours by the prism or rainbow. Apart from the sunlight, no object has any colour, as is shown by the fact that, as soon as light is withdrawn from the landscape, the colours fade from the robe of nature. The difference of colour in different objects while the sun is shining is produced by some subtle difference of texture or superficies, which makes each object absorb certain rays, and reflect certain other rays, in different proportions. Now, Christ is the Sun of Righteousness, in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily—the fair colour of every grace and Christian virtue. When Christ is shining upon

**asserts that he will hold fast his integrity**

*a* Ac. xxiv. 16; 1 Jno. iii. 21.

*v. 5. Dr. R. Welton*, 451; *Dr. R. Warren*, iii. 233.

*vv. 5, 6. Bp. Hickman*, i. 352; *Dr. B. Calamy*, 318; *Dr. S. Elsmere*, 239; *Dr. H. Smith*, 166.

*v. 6. Dr. N. Brady*, ii. 25; *Dr. J. Orr*, i. 170; *Dr. J. Disney*, i. 279; *Dr. J. Langhorne*, ii. 190; *Sydney Smith*, 278.

*b Dr. H. Bonar.* "Truth and reason are common to every one, and are no more his who spake them first, than his who spake them after."—*Montaigne.*

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The nearer you get to the fountain, the clearer the stream.

*c Dr. Goulbourn.*

**the hope of the hypocrite is vain**

*a Fausset.*

*b* "One of the strongest passages to prove Job's instinctive and ineradicable faith in the immortality of the living principle."—*Spk. Com.*

' Lit. *cuts asunder*; the metaphor is derived fr. cutting the cords of a tent, and removing it."—*Wordsworth.*

*c* Pr. xxviii. 9; Je. xi. 11, xiv. 12; Exe. viii. 18; Zec. vii. 13; Ja. iv. 3.

*v.* 8. *E. Littleton*, ii. 33; *Dr. R. Welton*, 310; *D. Wilcox.* i. 163; *Dr. J. Weedon*, 145.

*v.* 10. *Jon. Edwards*, ii. 71.

*d Dr. H. Bonar.*

*e Spencer.*

**he proposes to teach the work of God**

*a* "This prepares us for a modification of statements wh. had been wrung fr. him, when his words flowed over fr. a spirit drunk with the poison of God's arrows. See ch. vi. 4."—*Spk. Com.*

*b Delitzsch.*

*c Barnes.*

the heart then these virtues are manifested there—by one, Christian graces of one description; by another, of another, according to their different receptivity and natural temperament; just as, when the sun is shining, colours are thrown upon a landscape, and reflected by the different objects in different proportions. But as no part of the landscape has any colour in the absence of the sun, nor can acquire any independently of the sun, so Christians have no grace except from Christ, nor hold any virtue independently of Him.[c]

**7—10.** (7) **be . . wicked,** "He who opposes my asseveration of innocence must be regarded as actuated by criminal hostility."[a] Some think Job intends to express his abhorrence of ungodliness. (8) **hypocrite,** Job viii. 13. Such these friends tried to make him. **God taketh away,** and "the secrets of all hearts are revealed."[b] (9) **his cry,**[c] that of the hypocrite, who must be an offence to the holy God. (10) **will he,** *etc.*, Job implies that he was himself no hypocrite, so could hold fast his faith, hope, and piety.

*Gain and loss for eternity.*—The word hypocrite here means properly the ungodly. He loses such things as the following:—I. His soul. II. Heaven. III. Christ. This loss is great—(1) Because of what Christ is in Himself; (2) Of what He has done on the cross: (3) Of His love; (4) Of His sympathy, fellowship, and consolation; (5) Of His reward.[d]

*Simile of the hypocrite.*—There is mention made of Parrhasius and Zeuxis, two excellent painters, that, being upon a trial of their skill how to excel each other in the matter of their art, Zeuxis drew out a bunch of grapes so fair and well coloured that the birds came and pecked at them, to the great admiration of the beholders. Parrhasius thereupon falls to his pencil, and makes upon his table the resemblance of a white sheet, tacked up with four nails, one at each corner, so artificially, that being offered to view, Zeuxis bade him take away the sheet, that they might see the excellency of his art that lay behind it. Whereupon it was adjudged that Parrhasius had gone beyond him in so doing: and for good reason too; for the one had only deceived silly birds, but the other had put a trick upon a knowing artist himself. And so it is with the close, reserved hypocrite; such is his subtlety that he doth not only delude silly birds, poor ignorant souls, but knowing men, experienced Christians, and, if it were possible, the very elect themselves.[e]

**11—13.** (11) **by,** concerning the hand or handiwork of God. Job proposes to state his belief concerning the Div. dispensation.[a] (12) **have seen it,** Job recognises much of truth in what the friends had said, and some of the same things he repeats. **altogether vain,** in making so unworthy application of your arguments. "Why do ye cherish foolish notions?"[b] (13) **this,** which he is about to detail: this is the view the friends took of the portion of the wicked. Job goes on to say, granting it is all true, you ought not to make of it an argument to criminate me.[c]

*The speculative difficulties of an inquiring intellect solved by the heart of practical piety* (*vv.* 12—28).—I. Every inquiring intellect has difficulties which it is anxious to remove. II. The principle which removes those difficulties can neither be purchased by wealth, nor attained by investigation. III. The heart of practical piety yields a satisfactory solution of all painful intellectual

difficulties. 1. This is asserted by one who understands what wisdom is; 2. It is proved by the nature of the case. Piety, then, is the "wisdom"—the solvent principle.[d]

*Successful hypocrisy.*—A clergyman of the Church of England was left, by the death of his relatives, the last of his family; and, resolving to emigrate to America, took ship with his worldly effects, to end his days with preaching the Gospel here. A convict, leaving his country for his country's good, in the same ship, concealing his true character, became intimate with the clergyman. On the passage, however, the latter, took sick, was nursed assiduously by the other, and, dying, left all his effects, including his sermons, letters, and testimonials, to the unknown nurse. Upon arriving safe in this country, the convict assumed the name of the deceased, and, presenting the letters and credentials of the departed to the bishop, was invited to preach, which he did, using one of the sermons he had inherited, and was called to a church, where he officiated acceptably for several years. The truth would not have been discovered had not the wretched impostor divulged it on his death-bed.

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*v.* 11. *M. P. Cornwall*, 121; *J. Styles*, ii. 333.

*d Dr. D. Thomas.*

"Very fine, sir, very fine, but people can't live upon flowers."—*R. Hall.*

"I had rather be fully understood by ten than admired by ten thousand."—*Dr. J. Edwards.*

"Aim at pricking the heart, not at stroking the skin."—*Jerome.*

**14—17.** (14) **for the sword**, they are slain in war. **with bread**, or they die in famine. (15) **in death**, or by death: *i.e.* death will have to do it all, bec. they have no one to mourn them. Poss. the picture of a plague-time.[a] **not weep**, bec. trouble shall be on them also.[b] (16) **he**, the ungodly man. **as the clay**, in such abundance that it shall be common as clay. In *raiment* the wealth of the ancients greatly consisted.[c] (17) **the just**, bec. in righteousness is stability and continuance. As we say, *in the long run*, goodness pays.

**he declares the portion of the wicked**

*a* "His survivors shall be buried by the pestilence."—*Delitzsch.*

*b* Ps. lxxviii. 64; Je. xxii. 18.

*c* Is. xxiii. 18.

"Thy actions to thy words accord; thy words to thy large heart give utterance due; thy heart contains of good, wise, just, the perfect shape."—*Milton.*

*Treasures of raiment* (*v.* 16).—According to D'Herbelot, Bokteri, an illustrious poet of Cufah, in the ninth century, had so many presents made him in the course of his life, that when he died he was found possessed of a hundred complete suits of clothes, two hundred shirts, and five hundred turbans. This anecdote proves how frequently presents of this kind are made to persons of consideration in the Levant; and at the same time furnishes a beautiful illustration of that passage in the Book of Job where the afflicted patriarch describes the treasures of the East, in his time, as consisting of clothes and money: "Though he heap up silver as the dust, and prepare raiment as the clay; he may prepare it, but the just shall put it on, and the innocent shall divide the silver."[d]

*d Paxton.*

**18 21.** (18) **as a moth**, Job iv. 19. A slight fabric in the garment consumed; rapidly and easily built, but as rapidly and easily overthrown. **booth**, hastily put up as a temporary shelter fr. the sun. Always a very fragile construction.[a] (19) **lie down**, to sleep. **not be gathered**, with a long and peaceful illness. **openeth . . not**, surprised by murderers, he only awakes to die. (20) **as waters**, like a suddenly loosened flood. (21) **east wind**, the most vehement and destructive in Eastern countries. **his place**, where he made sure long to remain.

**the terror of the wicked, though rich**

*a* Is. i. 8.

"The house of the ungodly man, though a palace, is as brittle and perishable a thing, and can be as easily destroyed, as the fine spinning of a moth, or even the small case wh. it makes fr.

*Keepers of vineyards.*—How often in my morning and evening drives in India have I seen these and other like passages of Scripture illustrated! Wherever a spring of water has been discovered, there is to be seen the vineyard, or field, or garden enclosed, green, fruitful, and beautiful, while outside is a barren

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wilderness. In the early morning, and as the sun is about to set, the keepers are at their work, watering their plants with the greatest care and diligence, and gathering the ripe fruits. But their labour does not end here. When the short twilight commences, and the beasts of the forest creep forth, they are still on the watch. They then mount aloft on the booths which they have constructed—a framework of branches of trees, raised on four poles, a shelter from the sun's rays by day, and a place of security at night; and there, if only a footfall or rustle of a leaf is heard, they give a long call, which is quickly taken up by another keeper in his garden at a little distance, the cry going on from one to another till it sounds like an echo in the distance, returning as it went, louder and louder, till sounded forth again by the first keeper.[b]

**men shall treat him with scorn**

**22, 23.** (22) **cast,** His thunderbolts of wrath. **his hand,** God's hand. "Before His hand he fleeth hither and thither. (23) **clap their hands,** in abhorrence of his character and joy at his fall. **hiss,** as at an object of execration.

*Oriental modes of expressing joy* (*v.* 23).—The present female way of expressing joy in the East, by gently applying one of their hands to their mouths, seems to have obtained in the times of remote antiquity, and to be meant in several places of Scripture. What their present custom is, appears in the following passage of Pitts, describing the joy with which the leaders of their sacred caravans are received in the several towns of Barbary through which they pass: "This emir Hagge, into whatsoever town he comes, is received with a great deal of joy, because he is going about so religious a work; and it is who can have the favour and honour of kissing his hand, or but his garment! He goes attended in much pomp, with flags, kettledrums, etc., and loud acclamations do, as it were, rend the skies; nay, the very women get upon the tops of the houses to view the parade, or fine show, where they keep striking their forefingers on their lips as fast as they can, making a joyful noise all the while, which sounds somewhat like yow, yow, yow, hundreds of times." Others have given us nearly the same account. This seems to me to be referred to in some passages of Scripture; and that the sacred writers suppose two different methods of expressing joy by a quick motion of the hand, which is lost in our translation; for I suppose the clapping of the hands in the plural is a very distinct thing from the clapping the hand in the singular, though our translators have confounded them together. The striking one hand against the other with some smartness, which we mean by the term clapping of the hands, might, and I believe did, obtain anciently as an expression of joy, not unfrequently, if not always, of the malignant kind; so the Prophet Jeremiah says of Jerusalem when it was destroyed, "All that pass by, clap their hands at thee; they hiss and wag their head at the daughter of Jerusalem, saying, Is this the city that men call the perfection of beauty, the joy of the whole earth?" (Lam. ii. 15.) In like manner Job, after describing the sudden destruction of the wicked, says, "Men shall," etc.[a]

remnants of gnawed articles, and drags about with it."—*Delitzsch.*

[b] *Journal of a Missionary.*

"Lightning and light may suitably illustrate the difference between the joy of the sinner and the saint. The one is like lightning, short, hurried, transient, scorching. The other is like light, lasting, healthful, beautiful, healing, etc."—*Anon.*

"There is a dark, and also a bright side to every providence, as there was to the fiery, cloudy pillar that guided God's people of old in the desert. Nature looks on the dark side and calls it sorrow and sadness; but faith sees the sun dispersing the darkness, and calls it by the name of joy."—*H. Bonar.*

[a] *Harmer.*

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## *CHAPTER THE TWENTY-EIGHTH.*

**the knowledge of natural things, as silver, iron, etc.**

**1, 2.** (1) **a vein,**[a] or mine: *lit.* an issue, or place where anything comes out. **place,** distinct from a vein, or mine. **fine it,** or refine. Heb. word used means, refine by washing.[b] The ancients also refined by smelting. (2) **the earth,** or dust. Iron is smelted from ironstone, *i.e.* the metal is encompassed with earth or dust. **brass,** should be *copper;* brass is a mixed metal. **stone,** *i.e.* stone-ore.[c]

*A vein for the silver.*—The fact is undeniable that the portions of rock which have as yet proved to be the richest in gold are those which are at or nearest the surface. Experience, too, dearly bought in numberless instances, has taught the miner throughout long ages that as he follows the vein-stones downwards by deep shafts into the body of the rock, the gold diminishes in volume, so that in many cases the cost has been greater than the value of the metal obtained. Experience in every country has proved that the yield of gold decreases with the depth. Argentiferous lead, on the contrary, expands so largely downwards, as to lead us to believe that it must yield enormous quantities of silver for ages to come. Providence seems to have adjusted the relative value of these two precious metals for the use of man, and their relations having remained the same for ages will long survive all theories. Modern science, in short, instead of contradicting, only confirms the truth of the aphorism of the patriarch Job, which thus shadowed forth the downward persistence of the one, and the superficial distribution of the other.[d]

**the darkness, the flood, the earth, and the stones of it**

**3–6.** (3) **he,** the miner, whose work is now vividly described. **end to darkness,** by opening a shaft, or carrying his lantern into the bowels of the earth. **perfection,** or extremities; he thoroughly searches the stones down in the darkness for signs of valuable metal.[a] **shadow of death,** in a darkness like death. (4) **flood,** *etc.*,[b] this should be rendered, "He openeth out a shaft from those who tarry above: there, forgotten by every (passing) foot, they hang and swing far from men." (5) **bread,** thro' man's industrious agriculture. **fire,** "blasting of rocks was practised on a large scale by the ancients."[c] (6) **sapphires,** Ex. xxiv. 10.[d] **dust of gold,** gold ore.

*The place of sapphires* (*v.* 6).—The stones which form and bind together the mounds and hills are taken from the very places where sapphires are found. For Jameson informs us, that "the geognostic situation of the sapphire is in alluvial soil, in the vicinity of rocks, belonging to the secondary floetz trap formation and imbedded in gneiss." In reference to its geographic situation, the same writer says it is found particularly beautiful in Asia, in the Capelan Mountains, in Persia, and the Island of Ceylon. Dr. Davey states that "the sapphire occurs in considerable abundance in the granitic alluvion of Matura and Saffragam (in Ceylon)." Thus, the stones of which the mound is formed are the true geognostic situation where the sapphire is found; and there can be no doubt that the workmen, in hewing and detaching the masses from the rocks, and in joining them to the mountains, did, by this secondary kind of mining, often find the

*a* Silver runs downwards into the earth, but gold is distributed on or near the surface.

*b* This would apply both to gold and to argentiferous lead.

Pr. xvii. 3.

*c* De. viii. 9.

On whole cap., *A. Fuller*, 509; *E. M. Goulburn*, 251.

*d* *Sir R. Murchison.*

*a* "The stones hidden in the deepest darkness, far beneath the surface of the earth."—*Delitzsch.*

*b* "Man cutteth a channel, or pierceth a mine road." — *Wordsworth.*

*c* *Spk. Com.*

*d* Is. liv. 11; Re. xxi. 19.

It was customary for ancient miners to hang suspended at their work. In some parts of England we walk, little thinking of the toilers beneath our feet.

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precious sapphire.—*And it hath dust of gold.*—The same mineralogist states (and it is a well-known fact), "that in Asia the sand of many rivers affords gold:" and it is washed down in great quantities from the mountains on the west coast of Sumatra, where it is afterwards found in the beds of rivers.[e]

*Roberts.*

**the hidden ways of man in the world**

**7—11.** (7) **a path,** that of the miner. His is a path wh. none but man could make.[a] **fowl,** bird of prey. **vulture,** hawk or kite. This class of birds is remarkable for length and keenness of sight. (8) **lion's whelps,** *lit.* sons of pride and fierceness, *i.e.* fierce beasts, who raven in most dangerous places for prey. **passed by it,** as inaccessible to him. (9) **rock,** flint, or quartz; hard stone.[b] **overturneth,** by blasting. (10) **rivers,** canals, or channels for draining the mine. **eye . . thing,** when the water is drained off. (11) **bindeth,** prevents dangerous leakings.[c] "Bindeth the streams from dripping."

*Cutting out rivers* (*v.* 10.)—In our common version, "he cutteth out rivers;" in one or two others "canals." The exact meaning is, the hollows that are delved by miners in a metallic bed or mountain, often serving as passages to the central chamber. By cleaving such openings as these, the metallurgist may truly be stated, which he could not be in the usual rendering of "cutting out rivers," "to discover every precious gem."[d]—Savary informs us, the canal Bahr Joseph "must have cost immense sums, being in many parts cut through the rock!" Bishop Heber also states that the lake of Ajmeer is formed "by damming up the gore of an extensive valley, and conveying different small rills into it!" Thus, in making his rivers and rivulets through the rocks, in order to convey the water to its destined place, he at the same time sees "every precious thing:" because his work lies in the geognostic situation of those valuable gems.[e]

*a* "The ingenuity of man is thus contrasted with the instinctive sagacity of animals, the far-reaching and keen vision of the eagle and hawk, the strength and force of the lion."—*Spk. Com.*

*b* Pliny describes the use of iron hammers and wedges in splitting and breaking through the rocks in the search of gold: and also the process of blasting.

*c* "Referring to the water that trickles down the shaft of the mine."—*Barnes.*

*d Good.*

*e Roberts.*

**the place and the price of wisdom**

**12, 13.** (12) **wisdom,** true wisdom; knowledge of the great principles and plans of God. Practical skill is recognised, but man cannot reach to sound the Div. mysteries. (13) **land of the living,** or among men.[a]

*Human wisdom* (*v.* 12).—An old man of very acute physiognomy, answering to the name of Jacob Wilmot, was brought before the police-court. His clothes looked as if they might have been bought second-hand in his youthful prime; for they had suffered more from the rubs of the world than the proprietor himself. "What business?" "None: I'm a traveller." "A vagabond, perhaps?" "You are not far from wrong: travellers and vagabonds are about the same thing. The difference is, that the latter travel without money, and the former without brains." "Where have you travelled?" "All over the continent." "For what purpose?" "Observation." "What have you observed?" "A little to commend, much to censure, and very much to laugh at." "Humph! what do you commend?" "A handsome woman that will stay at home, an eloquent preacher that will preach short sermons, a good writer that will not write too much, and a fool that has sense enough to hold his tongue." "What do you censure?" "A man who marries a girl for her fine clothing, a youth who studies law or medicine while he has got the use of his hands, and the people who elect a drunkard to office." "What do you laugh at?" "I laugh at a man who expects his position to command that respect which

*a* "Job implies both its invaluable worth, and the impossibility of buying it at any price."—*Fausset.*

"Man is not cognisant of anything wh. represents the value of wisdom, or which he can offer in exchange for it."—*Wordsworth.*

Pr. viii. 12; Col. ii. 3; Ja. i. 5.

*v.* 12. *Dr. W. Vincent,* ii. 1.

*vv.* 12, 13. *T. Dwight,* i. 5.

his personal qualities and qualifications do not merit." He was dismissed.[b]

**14—16.** (14) **depth,** or abyss (Gen. xlix. 25). "The subterranean waters that feed the visible waters."[a] (15) **gold,** *marg.* fine gold. The ordinary word for gold is not used here, but one from a Heb. root, meaning "to shut up with care,"[b] as a precious thing. It may be rendered *choice* or *pure* gold. **weighed,** "the precious metals were weighed out before coining was known." (16) **gold of Ophir,**[c] ch. xxii. 24. **onyx,** Ge. ii. 12; Ex. xxviii. 20.[d] **sapphire,** Ex. xxiv. 10.

*Providence of God in creation.*—I. The remarkable provision of Divine goodness and wisdom in making the earth itself a storehouse of substances that should contribute so largely to the comfort, gratification, and improvement of the human race. II. Man's art and industry necessary to the acquisition and use of those materials which God has stored up in the earth for his benefit. III. Remarkable adaptation between the productions and contents of the earth, and the faculties given to man for their discovery and use. IV. Man's industry in searching for the precious metals an example of the earnestness and perseverance with which he should seek for the better and more enduring riches.[e]

*The topaz* (*v.* 19).—The topaz is a very beautiful gem, sometimes nearly transparent, and of different sizes, forms, and colours. Its general colour is bright yellow, tinged with red, orange, or green, and is found in some countries of a blue, green, or yellow colour. The Brazilian species is often as transparent as a piece of ice when the surface is melting. It is embedded in granite and other rocks in every part of the world, chiefly in veins of tin. It is either in crystal or in rounded masses, sometimes weighing several ounces. In Scotland, the topaz is found at Cairngorm, and receives its name from that place. The Oriental topazes were highly esteemed. Those of Ethiopia were celebrated for their wonderful lustre. Pliny says that the topaz belongs to Arabia, and derived its name from the island Topazos, now Zemorget, in the Red Sea. Hence the patriarch Job tells the people of that land, valuable as that stone was, true wisdom far exceedeth it, because it maketh rich, and addeth no sorrow therewith. Such was the feeling of Moses when he left the court of Pharaoh, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, for he had respect unto the recompense of reward; for he sought that wisdom which maketh wise to eternal life. The topaz was worn on the high priest's breastplate; on the robes of the Tyrian king; and is spoken of as in the foundations of the New Jerusalem[f]—*Knowledge and wisdom.*—If there is anything that may well occasion surprise, it is the thoughtlessness of dying men—their thoughtlessness with regard to their spiritual and eternal interests. They traverse seas; they explore continents; they pry into the secrets of the wilderness; they climb the snow-capped mountains; they mark the transit of distant planets; they unroll antique parchments, and pore over moth-eaten volumes; they excavate buried cities like Nineveh and Pompeii; they decipher old inscriptions, and scrutinise Egyptian hieroglyphs; they study the fossil autographs of dead ages on the rocky pages of the earth, till the globe becomes their library, and cataracts and currents cut the leaves

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*b Dr. Haven.*

**wisdom not to be purchased**

*a Delitzsch.*

Ge. vii. 11; De. viii. 7; Ps. xxxvi. 6.

*b* Heb. *segor,* shut up.

Comp. 1 Ki. vi. 20, marg., vii. 49, x. 21; 2 Chr. iv. 20, ix. 20.

*c* Heb. *cethem,* what is hidden.

*d* Heb. *shoham.* "It has its particles arranged in parallel layers; white alternating with blue, grey, or brown. It was much used by the ancients for cameos."—*Ayre.*

*e Dr. Robinson.* "I am sure of two things respecting myself and my own experience: that I have such a load of guilt on this account alone, that if there were not the blood of Christ for my propitiation, I must perish for ever; and that in proportion as my unruly member, the tongue, is tamed, I enjoy the heart-reviving presence and peace of God."—*H. Venn.*

*f Bibl. Treas.* Knowledge is the treasure of the mind, but discretion is the key to it, without which it is useless. There are no such safeguards as virtue and wisdom. The one secures the soul, the other the estate and body.

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Fortune first fools the man she means to foil.

"Head-knowledge is our own, and can polish only the outside; heart-knowledge is the Spirit's work, and makes all glorious within."—*Adam.*

"What a man can write out clearly, correctly, and briefly, without book or reference of any kind, that he undoubtedly knows, whatever else he may be ignorant of. For knowledge that falls short of that, knowledge that is vague, hazy, indistinct, and uncertain I for one, profess no respect." —*Lord Stanley.*

*g Gillett.*

of long-sealed volumes that they may be read; they question the microscope for the minute wonders of creative skill in the structure of a sand-grain, an animalcule, or a snow-flake; they dissolve air and water into their original elements, and unfold the laws that govern the combination of these elements; they track the lightning to its lair, tame it, and teach it, charged with messages, to leap along their iron wires; they penetrate the invisible realm of mind, search out its constitution, the order of its faculties, the methods of their operation, and the laws by which they are governed; they give wing to fancy, and revel in the strange weird domain of imaginary existence, surrendering their being almost to the spell of fiction and romance; and yet—while the mind is thus roused to intense activity, while the waves of the sea of human thought roll on, and cover almost everything tangible or conceivable—the one great theme which towers above others, like the Alps above their valleys, is left, like a mountain island of the ocean, neglected and unexplored. Men are intent to study the world around, but not the world within them. They read the doom of nations, and forget their own. They decipher old crumbling monuments of stone, but translate not the inscriptions on the living tablets of the heart. They linger spellbound over the poet's page; they sit at the feet of the philosopher: they listen to the sagacity of statesmen; they are kindled to enthusiasm by the creations of the artist, or by the magnificent span of cathedral domes; and yet when a "greater than the temple," a "greater than Solomon," He that "spake as never man spake," opens His lips to reveal the secrets of the life eternal, they turn away with stolid indifference or cold contempt.[g]

**wisdom more valuable than gold or gems**

**17–19.** (17) **crystal,**[a] the word occurs nowhere else in the Bible: probably *glass.* **jewels,** *lit.* vases, vessels. (18) **coral,** *ramoth,*[b] lit. *high things.* Comp. Eze. xxvii. 16. Coral was obtained in the Red Sea. **pearls,** *lit.* what is frozen, ice; so prob. crystals are meant. *Rubies,* poss. these are pearls from the oyster. There may have been pearls of a ruddy tinge.[c] (19) **topaz,**[d] Ex. xxviii. 17.

*The supreme value and excellence of true wisdom.*—The superiority of Divine wisdom or true piety over all earthly treasures evinced—I. In its intrinsic excellence. II. In its ability to afford true and solid happiness. III. In its endless durability.[e]

*Coral.*—The word *ramoth* is rendered "coral" in conformity with the opinion of the Hebrew interpreters and the renderings of the Oriental versions; and although certainty cannot be attained, we are disposed to rest in the conclusion thus authorised. This valuable substance is well known as an aggregation of animals, each resembling the common sea anemone (*Actinia*), and hence the class is called Actinozoa, or actinia-like an mals. The hard portion of the coralline structure is called the polypidom, and may be horny and flexible, or hard and stony; it may also be branched or arborescent, as in the coral of commerce; or in other kinds assume the form of a compact mass of rock. The polypidom is invested with a jelly-like flesh, which connects together the individual polypes, and unites them into one community. The well-known red coral is found growing, tree-like, at the bottom of the Mediterranean and other seas, from which it is dredged up periodically The stony corals are confined to

*a* Heb. *zecuciih,* fr. *zacac,* to be pure, transparent.

*b* LXX. and *Jerome* trans., exalted or valuable things. The Rabbins refer it to the red coral.

*c Carey.*

*d* According to Pliny there was an island named *Topazos,* on the western coast of the Red Sea, and another called *Cytis,* at the entrance of the sea, both noted for topazes.

*e Dr. Robinson.*

"The ancient Egyp. excelled in the manufacture of glass. They had the secret of introducing gold between layers

the tropics, where with succeeding generations of their countless multitudes enormous masses are formed, which, rising near the surface of the water, endanger navigation, or, rising above it, form islands, which ultimately acquire soil and vegetable produce, and become fit for the abode of men. We have the rather mentioned these particulars because much of this was probably known to Job, as the Red Sea abounds, in a remarkable degree, with coral masses, reefs of which extend throughout, and in some places rise ten fathoms above the water. One of the largest islands in the gulf, that of Kameran, is formed entirely of coral rock, which rises, without any inequality of surface, to the height of twenty feet above the level of the sea. As the coral rock is soft, and easily cut, most of the houses on the south-western coast of Arabia are built entirely with it. The gulf has, indeed, been in all ages celebrated for its coral, which strengthens the probability that it is here intended by Job, as it could scarcely fail to have been known to him. As this substance was anciently held in very high esteem, we need not wonder to find it mentioned along with the onyx and sapphire.*f*—*Advantage of knowledge.*—In England a man of small fortune may cast his regards around him, and say, with truth and exultation, "I am lodged in a house that affords me conveniences and comforts, which even a king could not command some centuries ago. There are ships crossing the seas in every direction, to bring me what is useful to me from all parts of the earth. In China men are gathering the tea-leaf for me; in America they are planting cotton for me; in the West India Islands they are preparing my sugar and coffee; in Italy they are feeding silkworms for me; in Saxony they are shearing the sheep to make me clothing; at home powerful steam-engines are spinning and weaving for me, and making cutlery for me, and pumping the mines, that the materials useful to me may be procured. My patrimony was small, yet I have post-coaches running day and night, on all the roads, to carry my correspondence; I have roads, and canals, and bridges, to bear the coal for my winter fire; nay, I have protecting fleets and armies around my happy country, to secure my enjoyments and repose. Then I have editors and printers, who daily send me an account of what is going on throughout the world, among all these people who serve me. And in a corner of my house I have books, the miracle of all my possessions, for they transport me instantly, not only to all places, but to all times. By my books I can conjure up before me, to vivid existence, all the great and good men of antiquity; and, for my individual satisfaction, I can make them act over again the most renowned of their exploits; the orators declaim for me; the historians recite; the poets sing; in a word, from the equator to the pole, and from the beginning of time until now, by my books, I can be where I please."*g*

**20–22.** (20) **whence,** *etc.*, repeating the question (*v.* 12) which nature cannot solve. (21) **hid,** veiled, like a fair virgin. **fowls,** whose keenness of vision is remarkable. Or reference may be made to divination by birds.*a* (22) **destruction,** realm of Abaddon. The vast profound of the nether world, below where even the miners reach. *See* ch. xxvi. 6.

*Practical wisdom.*—Do not question the government of the world, nor the wisdom and righteousness of God therein. Leave

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of glass; and in their bottles a gold band alternates in a series of blue, green, and other colours." — *Wordsworth.*

*v.* 18. *Bp. Fleetwood*, 114.

*f Bibl. Treas.*

"To write or talk concerning any subject, without having previously taken the pains to understand it, is a breach of the duty which we owe to ourselves, though it may be no offence against the laws of the land. The privilege of talking and even publishing, nonsense is necessary in a free state; but the more sparingly we make use of it the better."—*Coleridge.*

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*g Gillett.*

**whence cometh wisdom?**

*a* The gift of divination was assigned by the heathen especially to birds.

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Comp. Eccl. x. 20.

*vv.* 20, 21. *T. Dwight*, i 39. "I would rather confess my ignorance, than falsely profess knowledge. It is no shame not to know all things; but it is a just shame to overreach in anything."—*Bp. Hall.*
*b Reynolds.*
*c Cowper.*

**God knows the source of wisdom**

*a* "Wisdom belongs to His omniscience, and is declared by His omnipotence." — *Spk. Com.*
*b* Is. xl. 15.
*v.* 23. *J. Burroughs. Fear of God, Disc.* 1.
*c Dr. Dick.*
In order to love mankind, expect but little from them; in order to view their faults without bitterness we must accustom ourselves to pardon, and to perceive that indulgence is a justice which frail humanity has a right to demand from wisdom. Now, nothing tends more to dispose us to indulgence, to close our hearts against hatred, to open them to the principles of a humane and soft morality, than a profound knowledge of the human heart. Accordingly, the wisest men have always been the most indulgent.
*d Bailey.*

**the fear of** God's work unto Him, to whom it belongeth to temper and order the several ages of the world in what manner it pleaseth Him. Attend thou on thine own duty; be contented with the present condition of the times; study how to serve God in thy generation; leave not thy station; depart not from thy rank; afflict not thyself with the things which thou canst not help; walk with God, as Noah did in the worst times; and let the badness of the age thou livest in make thee more wise, more circumspect, more humble, as the fire burns hottest in the coldest weather.[b]

*Knowledge and wisdom.*—

Knowledge and wisdom, far from being one,
Have ofttimes no connection. Knowledge dwells
In heads replete with thoughts of other men,
Wisdom in minds attentive to their own;
Knowledge, a rude unprofitable mass,
The mere materials with which wisdom builds,
Till smoothed and squared, and fitted into place,
Does but encumber what it seems t' enrich.
Knowledge is proud that he has learn'd so much,
Wisdom is humble that he knows no more.[c]

**23—25.** (23) **God,** *Elohim.* Set out distinctly as the only centre of true wisdom.[a] "The deep reasons of the Divine dispensations could be known only to God Himself. He had given no *clue* by wh. man could discover them." (24) **looketh,** *etc.*, seeing and knowing everything. (25) **weight . . winds,** affixing quantity to the thing that seemed to have no weight. **weigheth,** better, measures, by setting bounds.[b]

*Divine wisdom—the winds.*—Were the air divested of its undulating quality, we should be deprived of all the advantages of speech and conversation, and of all the pleasures of music. Were it deprived of its reflective powers, the sun would appear in one part of the sky in dazzling brightness, while all around would appear dark as midnight, and the stars would be visible at noonday. Were it deprived of its refractive powers, instead of the gradual approach of day and night, which we now experience, we should be transported all at once from midnight darkness to the splendours of noonday, and, at sunset, should make a sudden transition from the splendours of day to all the horrors of midnight. In fine, were the oxygen from the air completely extracted, destruction would seize on all the tribes of the living world, throughout all the regions of earth, air, and sea.[c]

*The angel of wisdom.*—

Be thou our queen, O lofty angel fair!
Worthy the sole and unobstructed rule
Of every sphere and every spirit race;
Heart-honoured—heaven-ordained—predestined heir
Of the bright line of ages numberless!
Since God, creating atoms, first began,
And ended with the universal world.
Thou hast beheld no equal, nay, no like.
Thee only we acknowledge, and for this,
Hold our arrival blessed. Empress, hail![d]

**26—28.** (26) **de ree,** controlling the falling of the rain. **way,** or course. Such mastery of the great natural forces assured God's sole claim to have the secret of wisdom.[a] (27) **declare it,** number it, reckoned it up. **prepared it,** "took it

as a pattern."[b] Or, "made it a matter of thought and inquiry."[c] (28) **fear**, *etc.*, comp. Pr. i. 7. **Lord**, *Adonai*.[d] **depart from evil**, *see* Job's own character, ch. i. 1.

*Wisdom and the fear of God.*—Some are thought the wisest who have the least of this principle of true wisdom. We shall show—I. What it is to fear God. This is not—1. The fear of despondency; 2. Nor the fear of terror; 3. Nor the fear of reverence; 4. Nor the fear of caution; but—(1) A fear which arises from a deep and true sense of the being of God; and (2) From a knowledge and consideration of the attributes of God. We shall—II. Show how it appears that this fear of God is the true wisdom. 1. It is a good principle by which to govern our reason; 2. And by which to order our administration of justice; 3. And by which to regulate the exercise of the duties and relations of life; 4. And to promote sincerity, uprightness, integrity, and honesty; 5. And as a principle of self-government; 6. And to save from overhaste in speech and action; 7. It preserves the mind calm in all states and conditions.[e]

*Marks of a wise fool.*—If you would know such as are wise above sobriety you shall discern them by these marks:—First, they have all the talk, wheresoever they come, like parrots. Secondly, they contemn others, like the Pharisees. Thirdly, they spurn at them which tell them of their fault, like Abner. Fourthly, they jump with Cæsar, like the Heriodans. Fifthly, they turn with the time, like Demas. Sixthly, they seek their own credit by the discredit of others, like the enemies of Paul. Seventhly, they love to hear their own praise, like Herod. Eighthly, above all things they would have their own will, like Jezebel. Whensoever these eight marks meet, there is a wise man and a fool; a wise man in his own conceit, and a fool in proof: these are the wise men of the north, and the philosophers of England.[f]

*Growing wiser.*—

That man must daily wiser grow,
Whose search is bent himself to know;
Impartially he weighs his scope,
And on firm reason founds his hope;
He tries his strength before the race,
And never seeks his own disgrace!
He knows the compass, sail, and oar,
Or never launches from the shore;
Before he builds, computes the cost,
And in no proud pursuit is lost.
He learns the bounds of human sense,
And safely walks within the fence.
Thus, conscious of his own defect,
Are pride and self-importance check'd.[g]

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**the Lord is wisdom**

[a] "Job is looking back to the time of creation; and he declares that though the winds, and clouds, and waters, may seem to be agitated and move capriciously, and at random, yet every movement of theirs is balanced in the scales of omnipotence."—*Wordsworth.*

[b] *Delitzsch.*

[c] *Barnes.*

[d] "The wisdom of God consists in the absolute knowledge of all principles, causes and effects in the universe; the wisdom of man, simply and wholly in unquestioning submission and obedience."—*Sok. Com.* *Adonai* is the Maker and Governor of the whole creation.

[e] *Sir M. Hale.*

[f] *Henry Smith.*

"Wisdom and fortune combating together, if that the former dare but what it can, no chance may shake it."—*Shakespeare.*

"Call him wise whose actions, words, and steps are all a clear *because* to a clear *why*."—*Lavater.*

[g] *Gay.*

## *CHAPTER THE TWENTY-NINTH.*

**Job sighs for the joys, etc., of the past**

**1–3.** (1) **continued**, having paused to see if the friends had any reply. It was Zophar's turn to speak, but he was silenced. **parable**,[a] term is here used generally for a figurative speech, poss. with intimation that deep mysteries would be in it. (2) **months past**, or *months of yore*. **preserved me**, from calamity.

[a] Comp. Nu. xxiii. 7.

"The Easterns,

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Job could see God had preserved him *from* trouble, he could not feel sure that God was preserving him *in* trouble. (3) **candle**, lamp,[b] ch. xviii. 6. **light . . darkness**, referring fig. of lamp to his former circumstances.[c]

*Sighing for the experience of the past* (*v.* 2).—Many can view the past with pleasure, but regard the present with dissatisfaction. The causes of this mournful state of things are manifold. I. It may arise through a comparative neglect of prayer. II. Or it may be the result of idolatry. III. Or the cause may be found in self-confidence and self-righteousness. Application:—Go and seek the Master at once, and tell him your sad state.[d]—*Spiritual declension considered* (*v.* 2).—I. The sources of it. 1. A remissness in secret duties; 2. An indulgence in some secret sin; 3. An undue and unnecessary entanglement of ourselves in the affairs of this life. II. The evidences of it. 1. In the spirituality of our minds; 2. In the tenderness of our conscience; 3. In the vigour of our exertion for God. III. The remedies of it. 1. By a renewed and more solemn repentance; 2. By getting a sense of redeeming love upon the soul; 3. By keeping eternity in view. Address those—(1) Who are conscious that they have occasion for this heart-rending complaint; (2) Those who are making progress in the Divine life.[e]

*Winter* (*v.* 2).—The Hebrew word *horeph*, which we translate winter, in Mr. Harmer's opinion, seems rather to mean precisely the wet season. "O that I were as in months past," says Job, "as in the days when God preserved me, as I was in the days of my winter!" In the days of his moist time, when, as he expresses it, "my root was spread out by the waters, and the dew lay all night upon my branch: my glory was fresh in me." Not in the days of his disgrace then, the days in which he was stripped of his ornaments, as an herb of its leaves and flowers in the winter; but like a plant, in the latter part of the rainy season, before the violent heats come on, which scorch and burn up every green thing. But the term *horeph*, from the verb *haraph*, to strip, literally means the stripping season; and signifies that part of the year which strips vegetables of their flowers, fruit, and leaves, and consequently the earth of its beauty. It is opposed to *kaitz*, from *koutz*, to awake, or quicken, the quickening or awakening season, and includes both autumn and winter. Is it probable that the cold and rainy season of winter would be an object of desire to Job, when "the heavens are filled with clouds, when the earth swims to rain, and all nature wears a lowering countenance?" It is more natural to render the phrase, in the days of his autumn, which in those climates is a delightful season; for then the heats are abated, the earth is moistened with dew, or refreshed with the first showers of the latter rain, and the various fruits of the earth, to use the beautiful language of inspiration, are ready to drop into the mouth of the eater; or, the fields and trees being stripped of their produce, are heaped on his board. The afflicted patriarch certainly referred to the end of harvest, in allusion to which he might say, with strict propriety, "my root was spread out by the waters, and the dew lay all night upon my branch; my glory was fresh in me."[f]

*Past days.*—

Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean.
Tears from the depth of some divine despair

when they sleep, have lamps hanging near their beds, and often over their heads."—*Kitto.*

*b* Ps. xviii. 28, xxvii. 1.

*c* "Some think the allusion may be to the lights carried before caravans in nightly travels through the desert."—*Noyes*, thro' *Fausset.*

*vv.* 2—4. *H. E. Manning*, iv. 122.

*v.* 4. *Dr. Warren*, iii. 255.

*d C. H. Spurgeon.*

*e C. Simeon, M.A.*

"Love thy memory, cherish thy friends, but, above all, govern your will and affections by the will and word of your Creator; in me beholding the end of this world with all her vanities."—*Sir P. Sidney.*

"That *summum bonum* which is only able to make thee happy, as well in thy death as in thy life; I mean the true knowledge and worship of the Creator and Redeemer, without which all other things are vain and miserable."—*Ld. Burleigh.*

*f Paxton.*

"Time and eternity touch me; for I am both. Time assaults me for the dust which I have, and insists that I give back to the dust every atom which I have derived the efrom. Eternity appeals to me for the spirit which I have. Owing to these two claimants, the partnership will soon

Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,
In looking on the happy autumn-fields,
And thinking on the days that are no more.

Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail
That brings our friends up from the under-world,
Sad as the last which reddens over me.
That sinks with all we love below the verge,
So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.[g]

**4—7.** (4) **youth**, lit. *autumn;* my harvest time, my maturity.[a] **secret of God**,[b] or intimate friendship: the counsel, or converse of God. Ps. xxv. 14; Pr. iii. 22. (5) **with me**, in granting me prosperities: when I could apprehend His presence. **my children**, their sudden death was the depth of Job's trouble, and the midnight of his darkness. (6) **butter**, Ge. xviii. 8. "Fig. for abundance of the simple luxuries of pastoral life."[c] **rock . . oil**, De. xxiii. 13. "Olives flourish in stony soils." (7) **to the gate**, as prince and judge. **street**, broadway, space within the city gate. Ru. iv. 1.

*Job's past happiness.*—It embraced—I. His enjoyment of the Divine favour and fellowship. Observe—1. No blessing so great, or enjoyment so sweet, as that of communion with God and the friendship of our Maker; 2. The favour of God the fountain of all real blessing and true happiness; 3. Intimate fellowship and personal friendship with God to be enjoyed in this life; 4. God's presence and favour sweeten every blessing. II. His enjoyment of outward mercies. These were—1. Domestic comfort; 2. Outward prosperity; 3. Public honour and respect.[d]

*The happy past.*—Job was reverting to the time of his prosperity, as is seen in the preceding verse, "when His candle shined upon my head, and when by His light I walked through darkness;" "when my children were about me, when I washed my steps with butter." The Psalmist also is speaking of the prosperity of those who fear the Lord. To say the secret of the king is with such a person, is a strong way of describing the intimacy which exists between them. "Take care how you accuse him to the great man, because his secret is with him." "Alas! alas! his secret is no longer with me; his lamp no longer shines in my heart."[e]

*The past.*—

When midnight o'er the moonless skies
Her pall of transient death hath spread;
When mortals sleep, when spectres rise,
And none are wakeful but the dead;
No bloodless shape my way pursues,
No sheeted ghost my couch annoys,
Visions more sad my fancy views,—
Visions of long-departed joys.[f]

**8—10.** (8) **hid**,[a] retired back, in reverence for dignity and age. **arose**, as a token of respect. They remained standing until Job had taken his seat. (9) **refrained**, *etc.*, stopped talking. Comp. entrance of men of honour into any assembly now. At once all would keep a reverent silence. **hand . . mouth**, ch. xxi. 5. (10) **nobles**, this term, with *princes*, indicates civilised and settled, rather than patriarchal, conditions of society.

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have to be dissolved between my soul and body, that earth may take its own, and eternity its own."—*J. Pulsford.*

*g Tennyson.*

"The rarest attainment is to grow old happily and gracefully."—*L. M. Child.*

"'Do noble deeds, not dream all day long.'"—*Charles Kingsley.*

**Job describes the occasions of past joy**

*a* The time of the ripe fruits of Job's prosperity.

"Job's wish is, that he might be restored to the vigour of mature life, and to the influence and honours which he had then."—*Barnes.*

*b* "*Lit.* the couch, or cushion, in an Eastern divan. Hence also the society, conference, and deliberation."—*Wordsworth.*

"When God remained cordially in my tent."—*Umbreit.*

"When God took counsel with me in my tent."—*Herder.*

*c Spk. Com.*

*d Dr. Robinson.*

*e Roberts.*

"Oh! if in after-life we could but gather the very refuse of our youthful hours."—*C. Lloyd.*

*f W. R. Spenser.*

**Job an object of respect in the past**

*a* "Illus. by following from the Talmud 'R. Jochanan was walking and

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leaning on R. Chija-bar-Abba. R. Eliezer perceived him and hid himself fr. him. Then said R. Jochanan, This Babylonian insulted him (R. Chija) by two things: first that he did not salute him, and then that he hid himself. But R. Jacob-bar-Idi answered him, It is the custom with them for the less not to salute the greater.' " — *Delitzsch.*

These nobles were men of rank, and would now be called, *Emirs* or *Sheïks.* **tongue cleaved,** so that they could not speak.[b]

*Goodness and greatness.*—I. Goodness often the shortest as well as the safest way to greatness. II. A good man sure, sooner or later, to gain the esteem and confidence of his fellows. III. A man's noblest ambition—1. To excel others in virtue, piety, and benevolence; 2. To act as the counsellor and guide of his fellows; 3. To comfort the mourners which command the multitude.[c]

*The hand on the mouth.*—When the Easterns wish to be silent, they place their hand upon their mouth, to express their intentions by action, and their sentiments by attitude. Many instances of this practice are to be found. "In one of the subterranean vaults in Egypt, where the mummies lie buried, they found in the coffin an embalmed body of a woman, before which was placed a figure of wood, representing a youth on his knees, laying a finger on his mouth, and holding in his other hand a sort of chafing-dish, which was placed on his head, and in which, without doubt, had been some perfumes."[d]—"On our taking possession of Rosetta, at an entertainment which was given, a young Greek came up to me, kissed my shoulder, and with his finger on his lips, without uttering a single syllable, slipped privately into my hand a nosegay which he had brought me: this simple demonstration completely unfolded all his sensations, and was expressive of his political situation, his fears and his hopes."[e]

b Ps. cxxxvii. 6.

c *Dr. Robinson.*

d *Maillet*

e *Denon.*

**Job describes the reason of that past respect**

**11—13.** (11) **ear heard me,** decide causes, and deliver sentences, as judge. **blessed me,** because sure of careful consideration, and a just decision.[a] **gave witness,**[b] by its fixed attention to the respect in which he was held. (12) **poor,** who had a just cause, but no counsel to plead it for him. **fatherless,** Job acted as protector to such as had lost their natural protectors. (13) **ready to perish,** in danger of being falsely condemned. **widow's** *etc.*, by saving her from unjust treatment. "A beautiful image of the administration of justice in patriarchal times."

a Pr. xxix. 2.

b Lu. iv. 22.

Jas. i. 27.

*vv.* 11—13. *Dr. J. Rogers*, iv. 257; *Sir A. Gordon*, ii. 207.

*The character of Job* (*vv.* 11—16).—I. We propose to show the excellence of this character. Notice—1. The character itself, diffusive benevolence, unblemished integrity; 2. The excellence of it; its aspect on society; true of all that are in private life. II. The importance of cultivating it in ourselves and of encouraging it in others.[c]

*Kindness to the poor* (*v.* 12).—I remember some years ago to have buried a corpse. In the extremity of the audience that surrounded me, I descerned a female, wrinkled with age, and bending with weakness. One hand held a motherless grandchild, the other wiped away her tears with the corner of her woollen apron. I pressed towards her when the service was closed, and said, "Have you lost a friend?" She heaved a melancholy sigh. "The Lord bless her memory!" I soon found the deceased had allowed her, for several years, sixpence per week! O my God! is it possible that the appropriation of a sum so inconsiderable, may cause a widow's heart to sing for joy, and save the child of the needy![d]

c *C. Simeon, M.A.*

The judicious Hooker used to say, "If I had no other reason and motive for being religious, I would earnestly strive to be so for the sake of my aged mother, that I might requite her care of me, and cause the widow's heart to sing for joy."

d *W. Jay's Life of Winter.*

A respectable merchant in London, having been embarrassed in

*The late Mr. Peabody.*—On the site of the temporary grave of George Peabody, in Westminster Abbey, are inscribed these words:—

Here were deposited,
From November 12 to December 11,
1869,
The remains of
GEORGE PEABODY,
Then removed to his native country,
And buried at Danvers, now Peabody,
In Massachusetts.

"I have prayed my Heavenly Father day by day
That I might be enabled before I die to show my gratitude
For the blessings which He has bestowed upon me
By doing some great good to my fellow-men."

"Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

The text was suggested in the funeral oration of Dr. Winthrop as that which might most suitably be inscribed on Mr. Peabody's gravestone, and the words quoted from Mr. Peabody are taken from the same address.

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his circumstances, and his misfortunes having been one day the subject of conversation in the Royal Exchange, several persons expressed great sorrow; when a foreigner who was present, said, "I feel five hundred pounds for him, what do you feel?"

**14—17.** (14) **put on,** as if it were a robe.[a] **judgment,** magisterial justice. **diadem,** or turban.[b] Job was fully clad or adorned with justice. (15) **eyes,** *etc.*, forcible refutation of the charge of hard-hearted uncharitableness brought against him by Eliphaz.[c] (16) **father,** father-like in tender consideration for them. **the cause,** legal action, wh. seemed obscure. Job took trouble that justice should be done. (17) **jaws,** jaw-teeth or grinders. Heb. the *biters*. **plucked,** *etc.*,[d] severity with the wicked is as essential a part of public justice as consideration for the poor.

*Job's character* (*vv.* 11—17).—I. His benevolence and compassion as a private individual. II. His faithfulness and justice as a magistrate. III. His boldness in opposing the wicked and oppressive. Note:—1. A truly good man a comfort to the oppressed and a terror to the oppressor; 2. A good man not deterred from duty by the fear of consequences.[e]

*Kindness to the poor.*—The benevolent Dr. Wilson once discovered a clergyman at Bath, who, he was informed, was sick, poor, and had a numerous family. In the evening he gave a friend fifty pounds, requesting him to deliver it in the most delicate manner, and as from an unknown person. The friend said, "I will wait upon him early in the morning." "You will oblige me, sir, by calling directly. Think of what importance a good night's rest may be to that poor man."

*Benevolence.*—

But come, ye generous minds, in whose wide thought,
Of all his works creative bounty burns
With warmest beam; and on your open front
And liberal eye, flits from his dark retreat,
Inviting modest want. Nor till invoked
Can restless goodness wait; your active search
Leaves no cold wintry corner unexplored;
Like silent-working heaven, surprising oft
The lonely heart with unexpected good.
For you the roving spirit of the wind
Blows spring abroad; for you the teeming clouds
Descend in gladsome plenty o'er the world;

**Job had been a public benefactor**

*a* Ro. xiii. 14; 1 Pe. v. 5.

*b* Heb. *tsaniph*, fr. *tsanaph*, to bind round.

*c* Job xxii.

*d* "Job is advocate, judge, sheriff, and executioner; a necessary and effective combination of offices in an imperfectly organised community." — *Spk. Com.*

*vv.* 14—17. *Bp. Sanderson*, 97.

*vv.* 15, 16. *Dr. A. Snape*, iii. 272.

*v.* 16. *Abp. Drummond*, 71.

*e* *Dr. Robinson.*

John Baptist Joseph Languet, vicar of St Sulpice, at Paris, sometimes disbursed the sum of a million of livres in charities in a single year. When there was a general dearth in 1725, he sold, in order to relieve the poor, his household goods, his pictures, and

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some curious pieces of furniture that he had procured with great difficulty.

Everything we add to our knowledge adds to our means of usefulness.

*f Thomson.*

And the sun sheds his kindest rays for you,
Ye flower of human race! In these green days,
Reviving sickness lifts her languid head;
Life flows afresh, and young-eyed health exalts
The whole creation round. Contentment walks
The sunny glade, and feels an inward bliss
Spring o'er his mind, beyond the power of kings
To purchase. Pure serenity apace
Induces thought, and contemplation still.
By swift degrees the love of nature wakes,
And warms the bosom: till at last sublimed
To rapture, and enthusiastic heat,
We feel the present Deity, and taste
The joy of God to see a happy world.*f*

**his past hopes**

**18—21.** (18) **die in my nest,** continue right to the end of life my comfortable circumstances.[a] *Nest* is figure for secure dwelling. **as the sand,** common fig. for boundless extent. Abundance of days compared to the multitude of the grains of sand.[b] (19) **root,** *etc.*, read "will be open to the waters."[c] Job likens himself to a palm tree. **dew,** copious and refreshing in that land. (20) **glory,** honour in wh. I am held will be constantly renewed: will remain fresh." **renewed,**[d] *will become young;* gain ever new strength and elasticity. (21) **unto,** *etc.*, turning from the hopes he cherished, to the facts he remembered.

*The nourishment of vegetable life* (*v.* 19).—"The precious water of the Cephissus is the property of the waivode only during the season of watering the olive-wood: for the remaining months the owners of the gardens, in a proportion settled by long usage, divert the stream into their grounds, for one, two, or three hours in a week or fortnight, according to the bargain at which they have hired or purchased their land. The instant that the stream is turned into the required channel, a public inspector, who is called *Dragaris-too-nen*, and is always in attendance, turns his hour-glass, and the gardener also measures the time in the same manner; other Greeks frequently being present to prevent collusion, and cut off the rivulet immediately at the expiration of the stipulated hour."[e]—It is well known that in the hot Eastern countries, where it rarely rains during the summer months, the copious dews which fall there during the night contribute greatly to the nourishment of vegetables in general. "This dew," says Hasselquist, speaking of the excessively hot weather in Egypt, "is particularly serviceable to the trees, which would otherwise never be able to resist the heat; but with this assistance they thrive well, and blossom and ripen their fruit."*f*

**his past hopes**

*a* "I shall die surrounded by my family and friends, and encompassed with honours."—*Barnes.*

*b* LXX., Vulg., and Jew. interp. think ref. is to the phœnix bird, which was supposed to reappear out of its own ashes. "The myth was, that the phœnix sprang fr. a nest of myrrh made by his father before death, and that he then came fr. Arabia (Job's country) to Heliopolis, in Egypt, once in every 500 years, and there burnt his father."—*Fausset.*

*c* Ps. i. 3; Je. xvii. 8; Ho. xiv. 5—7.

*d* Ge. xlix. 24.

*e Hobhouse.*

*f Burder.*

**his past influence**

**22—25.** (22) **my words,**[a] given as counsel, or as judicial decision. **dropped,** fig. for eloquence, esp. in Oriental poetry.[b] (23) **waited,** as does a parched and thirsty land for the rain. **latter rain,** those wh. fall in the month of March; necess. to bring forward the harvest. (24) **laughed,** they thought it too great a condescension to be believed.[c] **light . . down,** they did not oppose me so as to make me frown. (25) **way,** or expeditions. **as a king,** surrounded by every sign of state. **comforteth,** *etc.*, a side-thrust at the friends whose intended comfortings had proved so great a failure.

*Review of the chapter.*—I. Evidence of the statement that the fear of the Lord is wisdom. II. Proof that true piety towards

*a* "This passage introduces a new theme, viz., Job's position among his countrymen as a statesman and leader."—*Spk. Com.*

*b* De. xxxii. 2.

*c* "Some read 'I smiled kindly on those who trust-

God is accompanied with the purest morality and love to men. III. An example afforded of what grace can effect in restoring and renewing fallen humanity. IV. A pattern for Christians both in public and private life. V. The retrospect of a holy and useful life a source of pure and elevated comfort in sickness and adversity. VI. Example of the uncertainty of earthly comforts and riches. VII. The experience of believers in respect to the sensible enjoyment of the Divine presence and fellowship liable to fluctuation. VIII. An exemplification of the requirements of the moral law in respect to our neighbour. IX. Job exhibited in this chapter as a type of Jesus Christ the righteous.[d]

*Silent influences.*—A man need not covet the high-sounding language of the egotist, the pedant, or pharisee, to have influence with others. He need not aspire to the deeds of heroes or the achievements of warriors. A fixed star is better than an erratic comet. The even, steady, patient temper, is better than the blustering and self-conceited behaviour. An unbroken series of good works performed in the retired sphere of a humble life, are more beneficial in influence than many a world-wide reported exploit accomplished on the theatre of public observation. The bubbling spring which makes the beautiful rivulet, flowing gently by the homestead of a country farm-house and through the centre of a rural little village, may be more valuable and useful than the rushing flood or roaring cataract. Niagara is an object of wonder to the contemplative mind. We stand amazed before its magnificence and grandeur. As the power of God opens the stupendous flood-gates and pours the world of water from the hollow of His hand, we bow in adoring admiration. But one Niagara is sufficient for a continent, if not for a world. Its influences are more of a sentimental than physical and moral effect. They are more beneficial to the tourist or traveller, than to the occupant of the soil and the artisan of the shop. Whereas the thousands of glassy fountains and gently running streams, which, unnoticed and unadmired by the multitudes, beautify the country, are refreshing to the meadow, the garden, the shrubbery, the cattle, and the thousands of needy inhabitants.[e]

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ed not,' *i.e.* in times of danger I cheered those in despondency."—*Umbreit.*

*d Dr. Robinson.*

r. 22. "Of a man who speaks with great euphony, it is said, 'His words come *tu'e tule yāka*,' i.e. drop by drop."—*Roberts.*

"To religion, then, we must hold in every circumstance of our life for our truest comforts; for if we are already happy, it is a pleasure to think that we can make that happiness unending; and if we are miserable, it is very consoling to think there is a place of rest. Thus to the fortunate religion holds out a continuance of bliss, to the wretched a change from pain."—*Oliver Goldsmith.*

*e J. Bate.*

## *CHAPTER THE THIRTIETH.*

**now he is scorned by the young**

**1–4.** (1) **but now,** painful contrast of present circumstances. **younger than I,** the expression is a general one,[a] and need not be referred to the three friends. **fathers,** intimating that those who insulted him in his distress were the children of the lowest and most degraded of the community. **with the dogs,** wh. are in East regarded with contempt as unclean. (2) **strength . . me,** they could not work, they are enervated, good-for-nothing fellows. **old age,** better, mature age; in them is no manliness, no vitality. (3) **solitary,** barren, their strength utterly exhausted. **fleeing,** lit. *gnawing the wilderness* **former,** *etc.*, hitherto utterly waste places. (4) **mallows,** a salt herb of the desert. **juniper,**[b] a kind of broom. The root would only be eaten in extremity.

*Reproachful speeches* (*r.* 1).—Fatch Ali Shah contented himself one day, after a quarrel among his ministers, with telling them publicly that he should bestow their titles on some of his dogs,

*a* "It was among the chief virtues with the Orientals to show respect to the aged, and their sensibilities were peculiarly keen in regard to any indignity shown to them by the young."—*Barnes.*

*b* 1 Ki. xix. 4, 5; Ps. cxx. 4.

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*c Sir W. Ouseley.*

"How happy is the evening tide of life, when phlegm has quenched our passions, trifling our the feeble remnant of our silly days in follies, such as dotage best is pleased with, free from the wounding and tormenting cares that toss the thoughtful, active, busy mind."—*Otway.*

"Let me not live, after my flame lacks oil, to be the snuff of younger spirits, whose apprehensive senses all but new things disdain; whose judgments are mere father of their garments: whose constancies expire before their fashions."—*Shakespeare.*

"When young, our years are ages; in mature life they are three hundred and sixty-five days; in old age they have dwindled to a few weeks. Time is, indeed, the messenger with wings at his feet. Yesterday he took my wife, to day my son, to morrow he will take me."—*Madame de Casparin.*

"Shake not his hour-glass when his hasty sand is ebbing to the last: a little longer, yet a little longer, and nature drops him down without your sin, like mellow fruit without a winter storm."—*Dryden.*

calling one the Sedr aazem. another the Amin ad douleh, and a third the Itimad ad douleh.[c]—*Respect to age.*—"Dost thou not see, O Gaul," says Morni, in one of the poems of Ossian, "how the steps of my age are honoured? Morni moves forth, and the young meet him with reverence, and turn their eyes with silent joy on his course." The obligation to reverence old age is a necessary emanation from that duty which we owe to our parents. The youth who pays due honour to his own father will never treat despitefully the grey hairs of those who pass by his father's door, or enter within his threshold. The Jewish lawgiver has made this duty the subject of a particular precept: "See that thou rise up before the hoary man, and honour the face of the old man." "I am young," says the son of Carachel, "and ye are very old; wherefore I was afraid, and durst not show you mine opinion. I find days should speak, and multitude of years teach wisdom." Among the Chinese, neither birth, nor riches, nor honours, nor dignities, can make a man forget that reverence which is due to grey hairs; and we are told that the sovereign himself never fails to respect old age, even in persons of the lowest condition. Many of our readers are doubtless acquainted with the name of a Swiss doctor, Michael Schuppach, of Lengnau, in the Emmenthal, who was highly celebrated, and much in vogue in the last century. He is mentioned by Archdeacon Coxe, in his *Travels in Switzerland*, who himself consulted him. There was a time when people of distinction and fortune came to him, particularly from France and Germany, and even from more distant countries; and innumerable are the cures which he performed upon patients given up by the regular physicians. There were once assembled in Michael Schuppach's laboratory a great many distinguished persons from all parts of the world, partly to consult him, and partly out of curiosity; and among them, many French ladies and gentlemen, and a Russian prince, with his daughter, whose singular beauty attracted general attention. A young French marquess attempted, for the amusement of the ladies, to display his wit on the miraculous doctor; but the latter, though not much acquainted with the French language, answered so pertinently that the marquess had not the laugh on his side. During this conversation, there entered an old peasant, meanly dressed, with a snow-white beard, a neighbour of Schuppach's. Schuppach directly turned away from his great company to his old neighbour, and hearing that his wife was ill, set about preparing the necessary medicine for her, without paying much attention to his more exalted guests, whose business he did not think so pressing. The marquess was now deprived of one subject of his wit, and therefore chose for his butt the old man, who was waiting while his neighbour Michael was preparing something for his old Mary. After many silly jokes on his long white beard, he offered a wager of twelve louis d'or that none of the ladies would kiss the dirty-looking old fellow. The Russian princess, hearing these words, made a sign to her attendant, who brought her a plate. The princess put twelve louis d'ors on it, and had it carried to the marquess, who of course could not decline adding twelve others. Then the fair Russian went up to the old peasant with the long beard, and said, "Permit me, venerable father, to salute you after the fashion of my country." Saying this, she embraced him, and gave him a kiss. She then presented him with the gold which was

on the plate, with these words; "Take this as a remembrance of me, and as a sign that the Russian girls think it their duty to honour old age." [a]

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[a] *Percy Anec.*

**the youth who despised him described**

5—8. (5) **driven forth,** as vagabonds unfit for decent society. **cried,** *etc.*, a cry is raised if one of them dares to show himself out of his lurking-place. (6) **caves,**[a] Heb. *holes.* Those living in such holes are called Troglodytes. (7) **brayed,** like wild asses when hungry. *See* ch. vi. 5, xxiv. 5. **gathered together,** huddled up in heaps. *Delitzsch* prefers the idea, "spread about in disorder, amid useless weeds of the desert." (8) **fools,** worthless. the refuse of society. **base men,** *Heb.* men of no name. **viler,** *etc.*, frightened, or scourged, out of the cultivated lands.

*Dwelling in the caves* (*v.* 6).—The Oriental shepherd and his family sometimes take up their abode in caves, with which the country, particularly about Askelon, abounds. These caverns are often so capacious as to admit the master and his whole property. In times of imminent danger, the people forsake their towns and villages, and retire with their wives and children, their flocks and herds, into these dark recesses, which have been from time immemorial the refuge of the oppressed. It was in these hiding-places that Baldwin I., King of Jerusalem, in the barbarous age of the crusades, found the inhabitants of many villages, with their flocks and their herds, who had favoured the cause of his enemies, and fled at his approach. In Egypt, such excavations appear to have been the settled abodes of a numerous and peaceful population. Dr. Richardson entered several mountain defiles, on his way to Nubia, where he found "a number of excavations extremely well executed, covered with sculpture, and painted in the most brilliant colours; likewise a number of pits sunk perpendicularly into the rock, all of which have been used as burying-places, and many of them still contain handsome mummy cases, made of wood and stone, beautifully painted in a variety of colours, and covered with curious devices." But, besides these, "high up in the front, along the base of the mountain, and over the rocky flat, all the way from Medina Thabou, there are innumerable excavations, many of them large and beautifully formed, painted, and sculptured with many curious devices, illustrative of ancient customs. In one place above Medina Thabou, the doors into these excavations are so numerous and so contiguous, that they resemble a row of houses in a village. They have a long piazza in front, and a large apartment within; and a long shaft running back into the rock. They rise in tiers above each other, according to the different elevations of the mountain. They have evidently been dwelling-houses, and, from the shady piazza in front, the spectator enjoys the most delightful view that can possibly be obtained of the plain of Thebes. In Hindostan, too, the fainting inhabitants are forced to escape, from the severe fervours of an Eastern noon, into vast artificial caverns, and into grottoes of the most refreshing coolness, which the great and the wealthy cause to be constructed in their gardens." [b]

[a] "Dr. Richardson found a large number of such dwellings in the vicinity of Thebes, many of wh. were large, and beautifully formed, and sculptured with many curious devices. Mr. Rich also saw a large number of such caves not far from Mosul." — *Barnes.*

*Wetzstein* gives a full account of Troglodyte caves found in the districts adjoining the Hauran.

[b] *Paxton.*

Ju. vi. 2.

"Depend upon this truth, that every man is the worse looked upon, and the worse trusted, for being thought to have no religion, in spite of all the pompous, specious epithets he may assume, of *esprits forts*, free-thinker, or moral philosopher; and a wise atheist, if such a thing there is, would, for his own interest and character in this world, pretend to some religion." — *Chesterfield.*

**the treatment he received at their hands**

9—11. (9) **their song,** his calamities were the subject of low jesting, even by such people. **byword,** comp. ch. xvii. 6.[a] (10) **spare . . face,** Heb. *withhold not spittle from my face.*[b] Strong poetic fig. of insult; need not be pressed into actual fact.

[a] La. iii. 14, 63; Ps. lxix. 12.

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(11) **loosed,** God hath loosed. **my cord,** of life; cord being fig. for the life-power which holds together our bodily frame.[c] **loose the bridle,** fig. for casting off all reverence and fear. Using unbridled license against me who once received every token of respect.

*Detestation of scorn* —

Ah! can you bear contempt: the venom'd tongue
Of those whom ruin pleases, the keen sneer,
The lewd reproaches of the rascal herd:
Who for the selfsame actions, if successful,
Would be as grossly lavish in your praise?
To sum up all in one—can you support
The scornful glances, the malignant joy,
Or more detested pity of a rival,—
Of a triumphant rival?[d]

**12–15.** (12) **right hand,** the place of honour; place of vantage.[a] **youth,** *lit.* the brood: a contemptuous term, *the brats.* The base crowd of his persecutors.[b] **push . . feet,** jostle me out of the way. **raise . . destruction,**[c] like an advancing army raising ramparts, etc. (13) **mar my path,** embarrass his plans. **set forward,** urge on, as Zec. i 15. **no helper,** term is a proverb among Arabs to denote a worthless person.[d] "Without kith or kin." (14) **wide,** *etc.*. Heb. like a wide breach they come: fig. fr. besieged fortress. **desolation,** fig. continued to the sacking of the ruined city. (15) **my soul,** lit. *my dignity.*

*Bearing scorn.*—As Pericles was sitting before others in a meeting, a foul-mouthed fellow railed upon him all the day long: at night, when it was dark, and the meeting broke up, the fellow followed him, and railed at him, even to his door, and he took no notice of him what he said: but when he came home, this is all he said to him, "It is dark: I pray let my man light you home."[e]—*Tendency of ridicule.*—A turn for the ridiculous, the lowest and last species of wit, is a thing to be shunned, for it often terminates in grossness and brutality. The following fable may illustrate the degradation of mind and taste to which it may lead:—

A bee and beetle chanced to meet,
One sunny day, upon a rose;
His neighbour thus the bee did greet,
Although, meanwhile, he held his nose:—
"I wonder much to meet you here,
For surely you don't feast on roses?"
The beetle answered with a sneer,
"I know the idle fool supposes
That in a rose there's nought but honey.
You think a flower, so fair to view,
With breath so sweet, and cheek so sunny,
Is only made for things like you!
But,—prithee, do not look so sour,—
A thing that hath a nose like mine
May turn the breath of sweetest flower—
Of rose, carnation, columbine—
To odours fœtid as the air
Where beetles love to delve and dine.
Each has his gift for foul or fair—
You buzz, have yours, and I have mine![f]

*b Wordsworth* reminds of resemblance bet Job and the suffering Messiah in this matter. Is. i. 6; Ma. xxvi. 67, xxvii. 30; Mk. xiv. 65, xv. 19; Lu. xviii. 32.

*c* "He has untied (loosened) my cord of life, *i.e.* the cord which stretched out and held up my tent (the body)." —*Delitzsch.*

*d Thomson.*

**they take ungenerous advantage of his affliction**

*a* Comp. Ps. cxix. 6.

*b* Vulg. understands, "an increasing crowd of calamities."

*c* "Express. denotes long-continued persecutions; they proceed like an invading army, making for itself a road through the wilderness." —*Spk. Com.*

*d Schultens.*

*e Jer. Burroughs.*

A lawyer visited a hospital, and conversed with one of the most degraded and ignorant specimens of mankind to be found anywhere. As he spoke kindly to the man, he drew the bed-clothes over his head, and sobbed convulsively. As soon as he could speak, he said to the lawyer, "Sir, you are the first man that ever spoke a kind word to me since I was born; and I can't stand it."

*f S. G. Goodrich.*

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**16—19.** (16) **my soul,** receptacle of my affections is poured out like a vessel.[a] Poured out in irrepressible complaints. (17) **bones,** *etc.*, he felt pain in the night when he looked for rest. **sinews,** better, gnawers, gnawing pains. Symptoms of the disease called *elephantiasis.* (18) **great force,** of God. The words *of my disease* are not in the original. **changed,** in form and appearance; it sticks fast to his broken skin. **collar,** of tunic, which clings to his swollen neck as if it would strangle him. (19) **like dust and ashes,** being so long covered with them.[b]

*Advantages of affliction.*—There was a little boy who was so crippled that he could not open his Bible, which he had always before him. A gentleman asked him why he was so fond of reading it. "I like to read the Bible," said he, "because it tells me of Jesus Christ." "Do you think you have believed on Jesus Christ?" "Yes, I do." "What makes you think so?" "Because He enables me to suffer my afflictions patiently."—*Saved by affliction.*—"I would gladly take your tract," said a soldier in the hospital; "but I have lost both my arms in battle; and I would gladly lose them again, were it possible, rather than not enjoy what I now possess. While I was far away in the woods, and did not know I should ever live to get back to camp, I cried unto the Lord in good earnest; and he had mercy on my soul."—*Use of affliction.*—But you have said and done well, when you look upon it as a rod of God; and He that so smites here will spare hereafter; and if you, by patience and submission, imprint the discipline upon your own flesh, you kill the cause, and make the effect very tolerable: because it is in some sense chosen, and therefore in no sense insufferable. Sir, if you do not look to it, time will snatch your honour from you, and reproach you for not effecting that by Christian philosophy which time will do alone. And if you consider that, of the bravest men in the world, we find the seldomest stories of their children, and the Apostles had none, and thousands of the worthiest persons that sound most in story died childless; you will find it a rare act of Providence so to impose upon the worthy a necessity of perpetuating their names by worthy actions and discourses, governments and reasonings.[c]

**20—22.** (20) **regardest me,** omit "not." Job thinks of God as looking at him in a calm and pitiless way.[a] (21) **become,** Heb. *changed to become.* A painful comparison of the present with the former time of God's favour. **thy strong hand,** it was much that Job felt that his affliction was *from God.* (22) **liftest,** *etc.*, as a mere leaf or stubble. **ride upon it,** driven resistlessly along. **dissolvest my substance,**[b] or terrifiest me.

*Sand-storms* (*v.* 22).—At seven in the morning we left Assa Hagga, our course being due north. At one o'clock we alighted among some acacia trees at Wadi el Halboub, having gone twenty-one miles. We were here at once surprised and terrified by a sight surely one of the most magnificent in the world. In that vast expanse of desert, from W. to N.W. of us, we saw a number of prodigious pillars of sand at different distances, at times moving with great celerity, at others stalking on with majestic slowness; at intervals we thought they were coming in a very few minutes to overwhelm us; and small quantities of sand did

**he describes his various afflictions**

*a* "The Arabs style a fearful person *one who has a watery heart*, or whose heart melts away like water." — *Noyes.*

*b* Job ii. 8.

v. 16. "'Why are you so dejected, my friend?' 'Because the *Lettákalam*, i.e. 'the ruinous time,' has caught me.'"—*Roberts.*

"If reproached as a dissembler, study to be the more bland, candid, ingenuous, and sincere. If reproached for covetousness, labour to manifest a larger measure of beneficence, generosity, and Christian charity. If reproached for pride, cultivate more assiduously the mind of Christ in its self-renunciation and genuine humility. If reproached as a bigot, cherish more sincerely the brotherly kindness and love which say, 'Grace be with all them who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth.'"—*John Hate.*

*c* *Jer. Taylor*

**he mourns the apparent indifference of God**

*a* "Compare the modern poet's wailing. 'O Thou art pitiless! They call thee Light, Law, Justice, Love; but Thou art pitiless.'"—*Robt. Buchanan.*

"Thou raisest

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me upon the stormy wind, Thou causest me to drive along and vanish in the roaring of the storm."—*Delitzsch.*

"And dissolvest me by tempest.'—*Revised English Bible.*

"Giving is indeed a fruit of love, but is not love itself. Love is a spiritual gift which involves the heart and not the hand alone; love denotes not what the hand does, but what the heart feels."—*Luther.*

*b Bruce's Travels.*

actually more than once reach us. Again they would retreat so as to be almost out of sight, their tops reaching to the very clouds. Their tops often separated from the bodies: and these, once disjoined, dispersed in the air, and did not appear more. Sometimes they were broken near the middle, as if struck with a large cannon shot About noon they began to advance with considerable swiftness upon us, the wind being very strong at north. Eleven of them ranged alongside of us about the distance of three miles. The greatest diameter of the largest appeared to me, at that distance, as if it would measure ten feet. They retired from us with a wind at S.E., leaving an impression upon my mind to which I can give no name, though surely one ingredient in it was fear, with a considerable deal of wonder and astonishment. It was in vain to think of flying; the swiftest horse, or fastest sailing ship, could be of no use to carry us out of this danger, and the full persuasion of this riveted me as if to the spot where I stood, and let the camels gain on me so much in my state of lameness, that it was with some difficulty I could overtake them.[b]

**he contemplates death as the only end**

**23, 24.** (23) **know,** have abandoned all hope of life. This was a moment of extreme despair. **house . . living,** Hades, the great involuntary rendezvous of all who live in this world.[a] (24) **howbeit,** *etc.*, eighteen distinct interpretations have been given of this difficult verse. We may give here the trans. which commends itself as clearest and most suitable to the context. "Yea, when HE stretcheth out His hand, prayer is nothing; when He destroyeth, can they cry for help?"[b]

*Death.*—The words direct us to three things. I. The Divinity of death. The Bible ascribes death to God. 1. Nothing can bring me to death unless Thou wilt; 2. Nothing can prevent me from dying unless Thou pleasest. II. The ordination of death. 1. This appointment is very natural; 2. It is very settled. III. The universality of death. Men when living have houses of various shapes, sizes, values, according to their tastes and means, but in dying they have only one house. All go to one place. What a house is this grave! Ancient, desolate, spacious, crowded.[c]

*Equality in the grave.*—Diogenes was not in the wrong, who, when the great Alexander, finding him in the charnel-house, asked him what he was seeking for, answered, "I am seeking for your father's bones and those of my slave; but I cannot find them, because there is no difference between them."

*Passing away.*—

It is written on the rose,
In its glory's full array;
Read what those buds disclose—
"Passing away."

It is written on the skies
Of the soft blue summer day,
It is traced on sunset's dyes—
"Passing away."

It is written on the trees,
As their young leaves glistening play,
And on brighter things than these—
"Passing away."

*a Delitzsch.* 2 Sa. xiv. 14; He. ix. 27.

*b Ewald's* trans. is, "Howbeit will not a man in his ruinous fall stretch out his hand? In his calamity will he not complain thereof?"

*c Homilist.* *v.* 23. *C. Love,* 225; *Dr. J. Hart,* 136; *J. Doughty,* 181; *Bp. Reynolds,* vi.; *T. Boston,* viii. 232; *Dr. H. Hunter,* ii. 290; *Bp. Maltby,* 16; *J. Cawood,* i. 202.

"What disarrays like death? It defaces the fascination of the beautiful. It breaks the lamp of the wise. It withers the strength of the mighty. It snatches the store of the rich. Kings are stripped of trapping, trophy, treasure: 'Their glory shall not

It is written on the brow,
Where the spirit's ardent ray
Lives, burns, and triumphs now—
"Passing away."

It is written on the heart,
Alas! that there decay
Should claim from love a part—
"Passing away."

Friends! friends!—oh! shall we meet
In a land of purer day,
Where lovely things and sweet
Pass not away?

Shall we know each other's eyes,
And the thoughts that in them lay,
When we mingled sympathies—
"Passing away?"

Oh! if this may be so,
Speed, speed, thou closing day!
How blest from earth's vain show
To pass away![d]

B.C. *ab.* 1520.

desired after them.'"—*Dr. R. W. Hamilton.*

"'Tis less than to be born; a lasting sleep; a quiet resting from all jealousy; a thing we all pursue. I know besides it is but giving over of a game that must be lost."—*Beaumont and Fletcher.*

"Ah! sweetly they slumber, nor love, nor fear; peace, peace is the watchword, the only one here."—*Herbert Knowles.*

*d Mrs. Heman.*

**25–28.** (25) **I weep,** Job appeals to the fact that he responded to the suffering poor, but God will not respond to him. (26) **for good,** for outward prosperity as the reward of piety and charity. **evil,** in sense of affliction. **for light,** ch. xxii. 28. (27) **bowels,** the seat of deep feeling. **boiled,** violently heated and agitated. **prevented me,**[a] met me, have overtaken me. (28) **mourning,**[b] blackened, but not by the sun; rather with a hideous disease. **stood up,** as an innocent man crying for justice.

**his reasons for expecting other treatment**

*a Old Eng.* for unexpectedly came upon me, surprised me.

*b Delitzsch* thinks reference is to the dirty black dress of mourners.

*Job's compassion for the poor.*—I. The poor when they are in trouble are great objects of compassion. II. To exercise compassion towards them is one of the principal duties of a Christian. 1. From political expediency; 2. From Christian necessity. Our exercise or neglect of charity will be the ground of the sentence that in the last day will be pronounced upon us.[c]

*v.* 25. *J. C. Knowles, 205.*

*c C. Simeon, M.A.*

*Kindness to the poor.*—The benevolent John Howard, well known for his philanthropy, especially his attention to prisoners, having settled his accounts at the close of a particular year, and found a balance in his favour, proposed to his wife to make use of it in a journey to London, or in any other excursion she chose. "What a pretty cottage for a poor family it would build!" was her answer. This charitable hint met with his cordial approbation, and the money was laid out accordingly.

"To mortal men great loads allotted be; but of all packs no pack like poverty."—*Herrick.*

**29–31.** (29) **dragons,** jackals. **owls,** ostriches; both these creatures utter the most dismal screams,[a] and live in the midst of desolation. (30) **upon me,** or *from me,* it peals off in blackened flakes. (31) **organ,** *pipe.* The common wind instrument, as the harp was the stringed.

**his forlorn and sad condition**

*a* "Job compares his mournings to the long melancholy cries of the jackal and ostrich: described by travellers in the East as inexpressibly mournful

*The harp and the organ* (*v.* 31).—The people of the East are very fond of the *yāl,* or guitar, also of the *kinaru,* or harp. When a person is in trouble, his instrument is also considered to be in sorrow. Many stories are told of the fascinating powers of the ancient musicians. "There was once a man who neglected all his affairs for the sake of his instrument; at which his wife

B.C. *cir.* 1520.

and piercing."—*Spk. Com.*

*b* Ps. cxix. 83; La. iv. 8.

"Poverty makes people satirical—soberly, sadly, bitterly satirical."—*Friswell.*

*c Roberts.*

became much dissatisfied, and asked him, in a taunting way, 'Will you ever gain a tusked elephant and a kingdom by your harp?' He was displeased with her, and said, 'I will.' He then went to the king of Kandy, and on his harp asked his majesty for a tusked elephant and a kingdom. The king was so delighted, that he gave him the elephant and the province of Jaffna. The musician then returned, and founded the town of *Yāl-Pānam*," i.e. the harp and the songster; or, as some render it, the harp-town, which we call Jaffna.[c]

## *CHAPTER THE THIRTY-FIRST.*

**he appeals to God's perfect knowledge**

*a* Ma't. v. 28, 29; 2 Pe. ii. 14.

*b* Pr x. 29, xxi. 15; 2 Pe. ii. 1.

*v.* 4. *Dr. R. Shepherd, Bamp. Lec.* 55.

"O perilous mouths, that bear in them one and the selfsame tongue, either of condemnation or approof! bidding the law make court'sy to their will; hooking both right and wrong to the appetite, to follow as it draws."—*Shakespeare.*

**1—4.** (1) **a covenant,** Job now details his integrity. It was the result of solemn purposing, and serious pledges, and it concerned virtue in all the relations of private life. **mine eyes,**[a] through wh. may come sensual excitements. (2) **what portion,** would there be to one proved unchaste. (3) **to the wicked,**[b] so Job grants that if he had been wicked he might reasonably have expected the severe judgments of the Almighty. (4) **not see,** Job ventures to appeal to God's perfect knowledge to confirm his integrity.

*Children's thoughts of God* (*v.* 4).—A clergyman once asked an intelligent little boy, "Where God was?" with the promise of an orange if he gave a proper answer. "Tell me," replied the child, "where He is not, and I will give you two, sir!" A child, instructed in a Sabbath school, on being asked by his teacher, if he could mention a place where God was not, made the following striking and unexpected reply: "Not in the thoughts of the wicked." A teacher, conversing with his class, made the inquiry, "Where is God?" One answered, "In heaven;" another, "Everywhere;" but a third replied, "God is here." A little boy being asked the question, "How many Gods are there?" replied, "One." "How do you know that?" said the friend. "Because," said the child, "there is only room for one; for He fills heaven and earth."

**he desires to be judged by his character**

*a* "He consents to have his life tried in the most exact and rigid manner, and was willing to abide the result."—*Barnes.*

1 Sa. ii. 3; Ps. xliv. 21; Is. xxvi. 7; Da. v. 27.

To speak truth and to do good is to resemble in some sort the Deity we worship.

*b Shakespeare.*

**5, 6.** (5) **vanity,** inward falsehood. **deceit,** in outward conduct. (6) **weighed,** in balances of justice: let my fault be found out, disclosed, and proved. If the balances be even he feels sure his integrity will be manifest.[a]

*The beauty of character.*—

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date:
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd:
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance, or nature's changing course untrimm'd;
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest;
Nor shall death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou growest:
So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.[b]

**7, 8.** (7) **out of the way,** *i.e.* the right way, the way of virtue. **after mine eyes,**[a] determined to gain what I coveted: or ruled by the appearance rather than the right. There may however only be intended reference to *v.* 1: comp. *v.* 9. **blot . . hands,** clean hands being emblematic of innocence.[b] (8) **offspring,** plants, or produce of the ground: **my shoots.**[c] The expression is proverbial.

*Tests of character.*—It is in the relaxation of security; it is in the expansion of prosperity; it is in the hour of dilatation of the heart, and of its softening into festivity and pleasure, that the real character of men is discerned. If there is any good in them, it appears then or never. Even wolves and tigers, when gorged with their prey, are safe and gentle. It is at such times that noble minds give all the reins to their good-nature. They indulge their genius, even to intemperance, in kindness to the afflicted, in generosity to the conquered: forbearing insults, forgiving injuries, overpaying benefits. Full of dignity themselves, they respect dignity in all, but they feel it sacred to the unhappy. But it is then, and basking in the sunshine of unmerited fortune, that low, sordid, ungenerous, and reptile souls swell with their hoarded poisons; it is then that they display their odious splendour, and shine out in the full lustre of their native villany and baseness.[d]

**9—12.** (9) **deceived,** befooled.[a] **woman,** reference is to a married woman, and to the sin of adultery. **laid wait,** comp. ch. xxiv. 15. (10) **grind,**[b] as a bond-slave. There is reference, however, in this verse to the deeper moral degradations of the captive. (11) **this,** adultery. **heinous crime,**[c] one subversive of social order, wh. must be recognised by magistrates. (12) **fire,** *etc.*, a descrip. of the character of this sin, consuming the manhood, tending utterly to ruin and destroy a man. "No vice pours such desolation through the soul as licentiousness."[d] **destruction,** *Abaddon*, or hell.

*Pure characters.*—Thank God, there are several cases of unsoiled character in the sacred history. No flaw was ever alleged against the beautiful Abel, the chaste and upright Joseph, the faithful Obadiah, with the heavenly seers Elijah and Elisha, or against Daniel, Ezra, and Nehemiah; and if Moses erred, it was only that "he spake unadvisedly with his lips;" and if this was set down as a sin by the Divine Lawgiver, it only shows how rigid and severe is His test, especially considering how many temptations and provocations the meekest man had to contend with. But what shall we say of Job, whom God Himself calls a perfect man, or of John, "the beloved disciple," or of St. Paul, against whom no flaw can be alleged? for we deny all fault or appearance of fault in him in the "sharp contention" between him and Barnabas, about John Mark, who was sister's son to Barnabas, for the fault was all with Barnabas, and Paul was blameless; and he was commended by the brethren to the grace of God, while nothing of the sort is said about Barnabas. But, after all, how many, of whom better things might have been expected, have been painful specimens of the frailty of human nature and its fatal tendency to sin. Beginning with our first parent, Adam, and passing over Cain, his firstborn son, to Noah, and then to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to Aaron, and David, and Solomon, how do all tend to humble us, to show

B C *cir.* 1520.

and if he has done ill, that he may suffer

*a* Nu. xv. 39; Eccl. xi. 9; 1 Joh. ii. 16.

*b* J b xvii. 9; Ps. xxiv. 4; Comp. Mat. xxvii. 24.

*c* De. xxviii. 38—41.

"Hold fas therefore by this anchor of happiness, religion. You will often want it in the times of most danger—the storms and tempests of life."—*Lord Chatham.*

*d* *Burke.*

he speaks of wrongs for which, if guilty, he would deserve to suffer

*a* Eccl. vii. 26.

*b* "Grinding is the work assigned in the East to the lowest slaves, and esp. to women."—*Spk. Com.*

"Let my wife be the mill-wench to another; be his abject slave, and be treated by him with the deepest indignity."—*Barnes.*

*c* Ge. xxxviii. 24; De. xxii. 22.

*d* Pr. vi. 27, 29, 32.

"Our characters ought not to be like that coat of many colours which the old man gave to his son Joseph, but all of one colour,—pure, spotless white."—*Dr. Guthrie.*

B.C. *cir.* 1520.

*e Dr. Holdich.*

**he speaks of his servants as, by birth, his equals**

*a* "This recognition of the rights of servants, and of their common origin from the same Father as their masters (*v.* 15), is an evidence that *slavery* is a contravention of that primitive jurisprudence wh. regulated human society in the age and country of Job, and was a part of the deposit of Divine tradition to man."—*Wordsworth.*

*b* Ex. xxi. 20; Le. xxv. 43; Col. iv. 1; Ja. ii. 13

*c* Mal. ii. 10; Eph vi. 9; Col. iv. 1, 9; Philemon 16.

*d G. Brooks.*

"I tremble," said President Jefferson once speaking of slavery in the United States, "when I remember that God is just."

"He who, when called upon to speak a disagreeable truth, tells it boldly and has done, is both bolder and milder than he who nibbles in a low voice, and never ceases nibbling." *Lavater.*

*e Dr. Krummacher.*

**he speaks of his kindness to the poor**

*a* "Job had a

how frail is humanity without God! Surely, looking at such failures, one is disposed to cry out with David. "I have seen an end of all perfection: but Thy commandment is exceeding broad" (Psalm cxix. 96).[e]

**13–15.** (13) **despise . . maid servant,** evidently slaves had legal rights, against oppressive masters.[a] **contended with me,** making their complaints. I had always treated them considerately.[b] (14) **riseth up,** to judge the cause of the despised and oppressed servant. **visiteth,** to make search into the matter. (15) **one fashion us,**[c] God, the sole and universal Creator. The common origin of men is the ground of opposition to slavery. The same manner of birth makes master and servant substantially brethren.

*The sinner's defence in the day of sudden visitation* (*v.* 14).—I. What shall we do? 1. Shall we flee? 2. Attempt to resist? 3. Invoke the aid of our fellow sinners, saints, angels? 4. Harden ourselves to brave our fate? 5. Throw ourselves on the mercy of God, His general mercy, His mercy in Christ? II. What shall we answer? 1. That we are sinless? 2. That we were driven into sin by an irresistible necessity? 3. That we did not receive sufficient warning? 4. That we were too busy to attend to religion? 5. That our punishment is disproportionate to our guilt? 6. That we ought to be favoured with a new term of probation? Apply both of these questions to individuals, and urge on them the acceptance of the only method of salvation.[d]

*The happiest man.*—The happiest man on earth, nay, the only happy man, is the "man in Christ." In him thou beholdest at the same time, the most important, as well as the most mysterious phenomenon under heaven. His exterior indeed at most, but little or nothing of his dignity. That which distinguishes him from others is within. Let us call up for once such an individual before us. We first inquire respecting his family connections. We ask, Whence art thou? He points upwards. Where does thy father dwell? Near and afar off, is the reply. How far off? As far as heaven is from the earth. How near? As near as the mother is to the suckling which reposes on her bosom. What is thy Father? He is an architect. What has He built? The world. What is He? A bearer. What does He bear? All things by the word of His power. What more is He? A landlord. Who dines at His table? The eyes of all wait upon Him. Anything more? He is a pilot. Where does He sit? At the helm, even of my little vessel. And what is His name? "The Lord of Hosts." What, is God thy Father? Yes; God is my Father. In the sense that He is so to all? No; as He is but to few. Why dost thou call Him thy Father? Because He loves me with paternal affection. For another reason? I was begotten by Him. In that case thou art of high rank? Yes, of the very highest. And dost thou possess great riches? My treasure is God. And wouldst thou exchange with any one? No, not with a seraph. Art thou not, then, a sinner in the sight of God? No. What then? Righteous and acceptable. In thyself? By no means. In whom, then? In the eternal Lamb of God![e]

**16–18.** (16) **desire,** or solicitude. Kindness to the poor was a virtue of great importance in the patriarchal ages.[a] Comp. Eliphaz's charge, ch. xxii. 7. **to fail,** in vain expectation of relief. (17) **myself alone,** without regarding the claims of

strangers or guests.[b] (18) **from my youth,** affirming that it had been his disposition from very early life to care for the poor and suffering. **he,** the orphan. **her,** the widow; *v.* 16.

*Hospitality* (*v.* 17).—We did not arrive at the foot of the mountain till after sunset, and it was almost night when we entered the plain; but as it was full of villages, mostly inhabited by Maronites, we entered into the first we came to, to pass the night there. It was the priest of the place who wished to receive us; he gave us a supper under the trees, before his little dwelling. As we were at table, there came by a stranger, wearing a white turban, who, after having saluted the company, sat himself down to the table, without ceremony; ate with us during some time, and then went away, repeating several times the name of God. They told us it was some traveller, who, no doubt, stood in need of refreshment, and who had profited by the opportunity, according to the custom of the East, which is to exercise hospitality at all times, and towards all persons."[c] The reader will be pleased to see the ancient hospitality of the East still maintained, and even a stranger profiting by an opportunity of supplying his wants. It reminds us of the guests of Abraham (Gen. chap. xviii.), of the conduct of Job (chap. xxxi. 17), and especially, perhaps, of that frankness with which the apostles of Christ were to enter into a man's house after a salutation, and there to continue "eating and drinking such things as were set before them" (Luke x. 17). Such behaviour would be considered as extremely intrusive, and indeed insupportable, among ourselves; but the maxims of the East would qualify that, as they do many other customs, by local proprieties, on which we are incompetent to determine.[d]

19—21. (19) **perish,** letting them die without giving them any relief.[a] (20) **loins . . me,** the parts of the body benefited by Job are poetically personified, and represented as thanking him.[b] (21) **my help in the gate,** at the place of justice, even when he knew that those round would support him in his decisions, however unjust they might be.[c]

*Making a poor man happy.*—Dr. Brown, who was many years Bishop of Cork and Ross, observing one day, at a visitation, a stout country parson in the consistory, with a tattered gown and an old wig, particularly examined him as to the state of religion in the parish in which he officiated. The clergyman, who felt that honest poverty was no disgrace, answered the bishop's questions with good sense and modesty, and said that he was a curate of about forty pounds a year, for which he did the duty of two churches: that he had a family of eight children, and not being able to afford a horse, he walked every year up to the visitation, a distance of thirty miles. He added, that if it were not for the additional labour of his own hands, with those of his wife and eldest son, they must want the necessaries of life. The bishop heard this artless story with much attention, and praising the conduct of the clergyman, said he would take the first opportunity that occurred to him to better his situation. With the Bishop of Cork to fulfil a promise was a point of duty, and not a matter of convenience, and in less than three months he presented the curate of two parishes with a living worth between four and five hundred pounds a year. The poor curate on receiving this intelligence hastened to town with the whole

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good conscience in the recollection of his dealings with the poor. It could not have been for any deficiency in the exercise of these virtues that his calamities had come upon him."—*Barnes.*

*b* "The stern law of Arab hospitality demands that whenever a guest is present at a meal, whether there be much or little, the first and best portion must be laid before the stranger."—*Robinson.*

Lu. xiv. 13, 14; Ro. xii. 13.

*c De la Roque.*

*d Taylor in Calmet.*

**and of his aid to orphans**

*a* Ja. ii. 15, 16.

*b* "The blessing of the thankful is transferred fr. the person to the limbs wh. need, and are benefited by the warmth imparted."—*Delitzsch.*

*c* "Job had a strong party who favoured him, and might readily have carried any point he liked."—*Barnes.*

Job xxix. 7—10.

"When earth and heaven, and all things seem so bright and lovely for our sakes, I were a sin not to be happy."—*Barclay.*

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of his family to thank his generous benefactor. The bishop was pleased with so unsophisticated a mark of gratitude, entertained the whole family with great hospitality, and when they took their leave, presented each with some domestic gift.[d]

*d Percy Anec.*

**22, 23.** (22) **arm fall,**[a] the falling away of the limbs was one of the most extreme features of the disease (elephantiasis) fr. wh. Job was prob. suffering. **arm,** the fore arm. May the flesh fall away from the bone: or let fore arm be loosened away from the upper. **bone,** chanel-bone; or *reed; canna*, the higher bone of the arm.[b] (23) **terror to me,** the fear of God's judgments ever kept me in the ways of righteousness. Or "terror would then come upon me, the destruction of God." **not endure,**[c] could not justly stand against His punishments.

*An imprecation.*—At Tiverton, near Bath, a few days before the 25th of December, 1824. Charles —— was in company with several young men at a public-house in the above village. After getting intoxicated, they quarrelled, and C. on leaving his companions, uttered the following dreadful imprecation: "If ever I enter this house again, I wish God may strike me dead upon the spot!" or words to that effect. On Christmas-day, however, he entered the same house, and sat down to drink and smoke as usual. When some one reminded him of what he had said a few days before, he made light of it, and said he did not regard that. The words were scarcely uttered, when he fell back in his chair and instantly expired! The verdict of the jury at the inquest was, of course, "Died by the visitation of God." Does not this occurrence remind us of the texts, "He that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy;" "The Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain."[d]

**had he failed in these duties he would deserve to suffer**

*a* "Let my shoulder fall out of its shoulder-blade, and mine arm be broken from its bone."—*Delitzsch.*

*b Gesenius.*

*c* Ps. lxxvi. 7, cxix. 120.

*v.* 22. "It is said, 'If I have done as you say, may these legs be broken.' 'Yes, let these eyes be blind, if I have seen the thing you mention.' 'May this body wither and faint, if I am guilty of that crime.' 'If I uttered that expression, then let the worms eat out this tongue.'" —*Roberts.*

*d R. T. S.*

**24—28.** (24) **gold my hope,** confidence: kind of god. He had shown no excessive delight in earthly possessions.[a] (25) **rejoiced,** as if I might confide in this gathered wealth, and so was taken away from trust *in God.*[b] (26) **sun . . moon,** as objects of worship. "The Zabian form of adoration, the earliest defection from true worship."[c] (27) **kissed my hand,** in adoration; "I threw them a kiss by my hand."[d] (28) **denied the God,** who made both sun and moon. The crime was treason against the Supreme Being.

**so also, if he had atheistically trusted in wealth**

*a* "This not a crime wh. has been laid to his charge by his friends: his conscience, prob. more enlightened than theirs, warned him of a danger, wh. to them may have seemed trifling." —*Spk. Com.*

1 Ti. vi. 17; Je. ix. 23.

*b* "Covetousness is covert idolatry, as it transfers the heart fr. the Creator to the creature." (Col. iii. 5.)—*Fausset.*

*c Wordsworth.*

*d Delitzsch.*

*Spiritual idolatry* (*vv.* 24—28).—Job declared that he had never been guilty of this great impiety. Consider then—I. The disposition here specified. An undue regard to wealth is extremely common in this world. II. The sinfulness of it. It denies in fact—1. That God is the only source of happiness to man; 2. That He is all-sufficient to that end. Improvement:—(1) For reproof; (2) For instruction in righteousness.[e]

*Kissing the hand* (*v.* 26).—To kiss the hand and place it on the head is a token of respect less revolting to our minds than some of those which have been mentioned. An Oriental pays his respects to a person of superior station by kissing his hand and putting it to his forehead; but if the superior be of a condescending temper, he will snatch away his hand as soon as the other has touched it; then the inferior puts his own fingers to his lips, and afterwards to his forehead. It seems, according to Pitts, to be a common practice among the Mohammedans that when they cannot kiss the hand of a superior, they kiss their

*e C. Simeon, M.A.*

own, and put it to their forehead; thus also they venerate an unseen being, whom they cannot touch. But the custom existed long before the age of Mohammed; for in the same way the ancient idolaters worshipped their distant or unseen deities. "If," said Job, "I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness, and my heart hath been secretly enticed, and my mouth hath kissed my hand, this also were an iniquity to be punished by the judge; for I should have denied the God that is above." Had the afflicted man done this, in the case to which he refers, it would have been an idolatrous action, although it is exactly agreeable to the civil expressions of respect which obtained in his country, all over the East.*f*

**29—31.** (29) **hate me**, consideration for enemies was a sign of high and noble character, a foreshadowing of the spirit Christ enjoined.[a] **lifted up myself**, in malicious triumph, at the calamities of my enemies. (30) **mouth**, Heb. *palate*, organ of the voice. **wishing**, *etc.*,[b] Job claims even freedom from evil *feelings* and wishes. (31) **men . . not**, Job applies to the men of his tent to say whether he had ever neglected to show due hospitality. **oh**, *etc.*, better read, "Who can point out one not satisfied with his meat?"[c]

*Christians of Carthage* (*vv.* 29, 30).—In the time of a great pestilence, Cyprian, Bishop of the church in Carthage, in the third century, exhorts his flock to take care of the sick and dying, not only among their friends but their foes. "If," says he, "we only do good to our own people, we do no more than publicans and heathens. But if we are the children of God, who makes His sun to shine and His rain to descend upon the just and upon the unjust, who sheds abroad His blessings, not upon His friends alone, but upon those whose thoughts are far from Him, we must show this by our actions, blessing those who curse us, and doing good to those who persecute us." Stimulated by their bishop's admonition, the members of the church addressed themselves to the work, the rich contributing their money, and the poor their labour. Thus the sick were attended to, the streets soon cleared of the corpses that filled them, and the city saved from the dangers of a universal pestilence.[d]

**32–35.** (32) **out of doors**, as if nobody would give him shelter. **to the traveller**, to the street. His house was on the wayside, and welcome given to all.[a] (33) **covered**, *etc.*, when he did fall into mistake and do wrong, did he cover and hide it up? **as Adam**, better, *after the manner of men*.[b] Could they accuse him of endeavour to cloak his sins and play the hypocrite? (34) **did I fear**, exposure, like a man keeping the knowledge of some secret sin. **went not out**, as if afraid to meet any one who may have found out my fault. "Have I ever acted like a secretly guilty man?" (35) **desire**,[c] signature, sign, bill of pleading. Job intimates he is quite ready for his trial. **written a book**, stating charges openly, so that he might answer them.

*Hospitality.*—The virtue of hospitality was, and still is, the national character of the Arabs; they value themselves upon it as their highest glory. One of their poets expresses himself very warmly on this subject. "How often, when echo gave me notice of a stranger's approach, have I stirred my fire that it might give a clear blaze! I flew to him as to a prey, through fear that my neighbours should get possession of him before me." Schultens,

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1 K. xix. 18; Hos. xiii. 2.

v. 24. *J. Webster*, 129.

vv. 24–28. *Dr. Chalmers*, vi. 187.

v. 26. *J. C. Dieterle, Ant.* 306.

*f Paxton.*

**or if he had triumphed over his foes**

*a* Mat. v. 43–46.

*b* Ro. xii. 14.

"By demanding his life with a curse or imprecation."—*Syk. Com.*

*c* "Stories of judgments by which the want of hospitality has been visited, form an important element of the popular traditions of the Arabs."—*Delitzsch.*

"Happy the man who sees a God employed in all the good and ill that checquer life. —*Cowper.*

*d Arvine.*

**or if he had been inhospitable**

*a* "In the Hauran a traveller may alight at any house he pleases; and at will it is immediately spread for him, coffee made, and a breakfast or dinner set before him. It is a point of honour with the host never to receive the smallest return from a guest."—*Burckhardt.*

*b* Hos. vi. 7.

*c* Heb. *tav*, my

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mark from *tavah*, to sign. *Delitzsch* prefers to trans. with precise reference to Alan's binding his sin, thinking the more general reference to be *tame*.

"Job refers to the procedure in ancient courts of justice, where the accused party appended his mark to the legal instruments in the cause."—*Wordsworth.*

*d Raffles's Hist. of Java.*

who quotes this passage from the Arabian *Anthologia*. remarks that the echo here mentioned refers to the practice of those who travel in Arabia by night. He imitates the barking of a dog, and thus sets all the curs in the neighbourhood barking. Upon this the people rush out from all parts, striving who shall get the stranger for his guest. Hatim Tajus, in Hamasa. mentions a custom of the Arabs, expressive of their peculiar hospitality. to put out the fire when they entertained a stranger, that he might not observe whether his host ate or not, but the former plentifully refreshed himself, though the latter often, lest there should not be enough for both, did not at all partake with him. "By the custom of the country, good food and lodging are ordered to be provided for all strangers and travellers arriving at a village. It is not sufficient, say the Javan institutions, that a man should place good food before his guest, he is bound to do more; he should render the meal palatable by kind words and treatment, to soothe him after his journey, and to make his heart glad while he partakes of the refreshment. This is called *bojo kromo*, or real hospitality."[d]

**he could answer all unjust accusations**

**36, 37.** (36) **take it,** my adversary's written accusation.[a] So far from being afraid of it, he would triumph in it, because so clear that he could answer thoroughly all its accusations. **shoulder,** as a mark of dignity. **crown,** for such it would be when fully answered. (37) **unto him,** *i.e.* God. **number,** *etc.*, every act of the course of my life. **prince,**[b] with high and royal bearing.

*Report of character.*—A young man's character was such as to excite universal disapprobation. He could no longer resist the pressure of public sentiment. He disposed of his property, and attempted to resume business in a distant part of the country; but his character, or, rather, his reputation, had gone before him. Men regarded him with suspicion. He was unable to secure the confidence and countenance necessary to success. In this case, his sins went before him to his new place of residence. The sins of men go before them still further. They go before them to the judgment, and will be ready to meet them there. What a fearful meeting! how impossible to escape from their accusings and consequences! It is related of a prisoner, that after he had toiled for months in constructing a mine from his dungeon. by means of which he hoped to escape, when at last he broke ground, and let in the light of day, which he had so fondly hoped to enjoy, the first object he saw was an armed jailer waiting to arrest him! That jailer struck far less dismay and despair to the heart of the prisoner than meeting with his sins will strike to the heart of the sinner at the day of judgment.[c]

**he is willing to suffer if he has been unjust**

**38—40.** (38) **land,** *field.* put for the proprietors. If the land declares I have no rightful claim to it.[a] **furrows,** put for the labourers on the farms. (39) **without money,** without paying due wages for tillage. **lose their life,** by plucking away from them their means of living. Job denies that he was unjust in the acquisition of his property. (40) **thistles,** brambles, thorns. **cockle,** from verb. *to be fœtid*, noxious weeds. **words,** *etc.*, the controversial words with his friends.[b]

*Illustrations* (*v.* 38).—Does a man through idleness or meanness neglect to cultivate, or water, or manure his fields and gardens, those who pass that way say, "Ah! these fields have

*a* Job xx. 19.

*b* Ge. iii. 18.

*c* "He had vindicated his character, sustained his positions, and they had nothing to reply."—*Barnes.*

*a* "Two documents would be required, the accuser's statement, and the reply of the accused. In the representation of the judgment before Osiris, Thoth, the accuser or advocate, stands before the throne with a scroll in his left hand, and the recording pen in his right: the person on trial stands behind, holding up his hand, in attestation of innocence." — *Spk. Com.*

*b* Ge. xxxii. 28.

*c Dr. Jeffers.*

good reason to complain against the owner." "Sir, if you defraud these fields, will they not defraud you?" "The fellow who robs his own lands, will he not rob you?" "These fields are in great sorrow, through the neglect of their owner."[a]—(*Ver.* 39). Was not Job the owner of the land? Does he not say in the preceding verse, my land? How then could he have caused the owners to lose their life? Dr. Boothroyd has it, "or have grieved the soul of its managers." Coverdale has it, "grieved any of the ploughmen." The Talmul has the same idea: "If I have eaten the fruits thereof without paying for the labour, or have afflicted the soul of the cultivators." Great landowners in the East do not generally cultivate their own fields: they employ men, who find all the labour, and have a certain part of the produce for their remuneration. The cultivator, if defrauded, will say, "The furrows I have made bear witness against him; they complain." Job therefore means, if the fields could complain for want of proper culture, or if he had afflicted the tiller, or eaten the produce without rewarding him for his toils, then "let thistles grow instead of wheat, and cockle instead of barley."[c]

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Job answers accusations that applied to life and conduct. o must not suppose that he or the heart-searching God he claimed his absolute personal righteousness. Even the good man knoweth "the plague of his own heart."
*d Roberts.*
"The plump swain at even bringing home four months' sunshine bound in sheaves."—*Lowell.*
*e Roberts.*

## *CHAPTER THE THIRTY-SECOND.*

**1—3.** (1) **to answer,** refrained from answering. **righteous . . eyes,** refusing to admit their conclusion that he must be a sinner because he was so afflicted. (2) **wrath,** indignation, not anger. **Elihu,** *My God is He.*[a] **Buzite,** descendant of Buz.[b] **Ram,** a family of the Buzites. **justified himself,** was more anxious to affirm his own innocence than to find the righteousness of God in afflicting him. He had almost charged God with injustice towards him.[d] (3) **yet had condemned,** *i.e.* were evidently still holding their opinion of his guilt.

*False zeal for religion.*—There is a sort of men who seem to be mighty zealous of religion; but their heart breaks out wholly in this way, that they fill the place wherever they are with noise and clamour, with dust and smoke. Nothing can be said in their presence, but instantly a controversy is started. Scarcely anybody is orthodox enough for them: for they spin so fine a thread and have such cobweb divinity, that the least brush against it is not to be endured; and yet withal, they are as positive and decretal in their assertions that the Pope himself is nobody to them. One would think they were privy-counsellors of heaven, they define with so great confidence what will and what will not please God.[e]

Elihu

his anger burns

*a Gesenius.*

*b* Ge. xxii. 21.

*c* "The name seems connected with Aram, and the language of Elihu is more strongly marked by Aramaic forms than any part of the book."—*Spk. Com.*

*d* Job xl. 8.

*e Goodman.*

**4—6.** (4) **waited,** a patient listener, though his feelings were aroused. **elder than he,** and custom did not permit the younger to speak until the seniors had quite done. (5) **no answer,** following on Job's last speech. (6) **young,** few of days. **durst . . opinion,** "feared to utter what I know in your presence." "The tone of the original is at once less boastful and more confident than the Eng. Vers."[a]

*An aged believer.*—About the year 1742, Mr. Drachart, the Danish missionary in Greenland, baptised nine persons. Among these was an old man, who, when he heard that his two daughters were to be baptised, went to the missionary, and asked if he might not be baptised too. "It is true," said he, "I can say but

he commences his reply

*a Spk. Com.*

r. 6. *Dr. J. Duchal,* iii. 155.

r. 5 "When men are completely confounded when they have not a word to say in reply, it is said, 'In their mouths,

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*i.e.* mouth, there is no answer.'"—*Roberts.*

*b R. T. S.*

**he perceives that the aged are not therefore wise**

*a* Comp. Ge. xl. 8, xli. 16; Da. ii. 20; Mat. xi. 25; 1 Co. ii. 10, 12, xii. 8.

*b* "Understanding or ability to form a judgment is not limited to old age, but only by our allowing the spirit to rule in us in its connection with the Divine." — *Delitzsch.*

*c* Ecc. iv. 13; Jno. vii. 48; 1 Co. ii. 7, 8.

*v.* 7. *Dr. W. Paley*, ii. 227.

*v.* 8. *J. Oakes*, 187; *R. Morehead*, i. 113.

"The day following is scholar to that which went before."—*Seneca.*

"The virtue wh. nature denies, experience brings to wise men." — *Politician.*

**hence he, though young, will speak**

*a* Trans., "Lest ye should say, We have found out wisdom, God shall thrust him down, not man."—*Revised English Bible.*

Is. v. 21; Je. ix. 23; 1 Co. iii. 18, 19.

little, and very probably I shall never learn so much as my children, for thou canst see that my hairs are quite grey, and that I am a very old man; but I believe with all my heart in Jesus Christ, and that all thou sayest of Him is true." So moving a petition could not be refused, though the aged suppliant was unable to retain the usual questions and answers in his memory. He was much affected while the ordinance was performed, and moistened the place where he was baptised with his tears.[b]

**7—9.** (7) **days,** those who have long experience of life. (8) **spirit in man,**[a] the spirit God puts in man. This spirit gives the true understanding, and this inspiration may come both to the young and to the old.[b] Elihu plainly regarded himself as Divinely guided. (9) **great . . wise,** not by the mere fact of their high position, or lengthened years.[c]

*Experience.*—I. Experience is a possession too often dearly bought and lightly valued. To the wise it is wealth. 1. A beacon, warning from many a rock; 2. A repast: true, it has its bitter herbs; 3. A harp: the mercies of the past put a song in his mouth; 4. A book: wherein he reads of his own heart and of a gracious God. II. Experience is a trust. Days should speak—1. Of your past mercies; 2. Of your past trials; 3. Of your past sins. III. Experience is a recorded history. Days do speak; they speak to God, and He sends a suitable reply.

*The test of experience* (*v.* 8).—Some time ago the Rev. James Armstrong preached at Harmony, near the Wabash, when a doctor of that place, a professed deist, or infidel, called on his associates to accompany him, while he attacked the Methodists, as he said. At first he asked Mr. Armstrong, "If he followed preaching to save souls?" He answered in the affirmative. He then asked Mr. Armstrong, "If he ever saw a soul?" "No." "If he ever heard a soul?" "No." "If he ever tasted a soul?" "No." "If he ever smelled a soul?" "No." "If he ever felt a soul?" "Yes, thank God," said Mr. Armstrong. "Well," said the doctor, "there are four of the five senses against one that there is a soul." Mr. Armstrong then asked the gentleman if he was a doctor of medicine; and he also answered in the affirmative. He then asked the doctor, "If he ever saw a pain?" "No." "If he ever heard a pain?" "No." "If he ever tasted a pain?" "No." "If he ever smelled a pain?" "No." "If he ever felt a pain?" "Yes." Mr. Armstrong then said, "There are also four senses against one to evidence that there is a pain; yet, sir, you know there is a pain, and I know there is a soul." The doctor appeared confounded, and walked off.

**10—13.** (10) **my opinion,** knowledge given him by the Almighty. The term gives an undue self-assertion to Elihu. (11) **gave ear,** or respectful attention. **reasons,** or reasonings. **searched out,** intimating that their arguments required much searching out and hunting up. (12) **attended,** closely, so as to weigh well the value of what you said. **convinced,** refuted, convicted. (13) **lest,** *etc.*,[a] i.e. your failure has been permitted, that it might be manifest; God alone can humble him, and unfold the mystery of His dealing with him.

*Objects of wisdom.*—

The wise man, says the Bible, walks with God,
Surveys far on the endless line of life;
Values his soul, thinks of eternity;

Both worlds considers and provides for both;
With reason's eye his passions guards; abstains
From evil; lives on hope; on hope, the fruit
Of faith; looks upward, purifies his soul,
Expands his wings, and mounts into the sky;
Passes the sun, and gains his Father's house,
And drinks with angels from the fount of bliss.[b]

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"Wisdom is the truest knowing virtuous pleasures at the cheapest rate."—*Fielding.*

*b Pollok.*

**14—17.** (14) **directed,** arranged, ordered. **with your speeches,** using your arguments. (15) **were amazed,**[a] better, *are amazed.* An exclamation of astonishment that they could find nothing wherewith to answer Job. (16) **waited,** at the close of Job's last speech. Elihu expected a further reply from them, and was surprised that none came. (17) **mine opinion,** declare my knowledge.

**he will now deliver his opinion**

*The folly of the over-wise.*—Simon Tournay affords a memorable and affecting proof of the truth of the Scripture. "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools." In 1201, after he had excelled all Oxford in learning, and had become so eminent at Paris as to be made chief doctor of the Sorbonne, he was so puffed up with foolish pride as to hold Aristotle superior to Moses and Christ, and yet but equal to himself! In his latter days, however, he grew such an idiot as not to know one letter in a book, or to remember one thing he had ever done.[b]

*a* "It may be that Elihu here turns from the friends to Job, and so passes from the second person to the third."—*Fausset.*

*v.* 17. *G. Whitefield,* 810.

*b R. T. S.*

**18—20.** (18) **matters,** words. Though the friends can say nothing, I can. **constraineth me,** puts pressure on me, forcing me to speak. (19) **belly,** *bosom,* "from which the words of Orientalists in speaking seem to come more than with us; they speak *gutturally.*"[a] **burst,** *etc.*, Matt. ix. 17. (20) **refreshed,** or that I may breathe, for he felt almost suffocated with keeping in the truth he knew.

**he asserts that he is full of matter**

*a Fausset.*

*Eastern skin bottles.*—The bottle is a necessary utensil in the tent of Arabian shepherds. It holds their water and other liquids, and is frequently used as a pitcher. The Eastern bottle is made of a goat or kid skin, stripped off without opening the belly; the apertures made by cutting off the tail and legs are sewed up, and when filled it is tied about the neck. The Arabs and Persians never go a journey without a small leathern bottle by their side like a scrip. These skin bottles preserve their water, milk, and other liquids in a fresher state than any other vessels they can use. The people of the East, indeed, put into them everything they mean to carry to a distance, whether dry or liquid, and very rarely make use of boxes and pots, unless to preserve such things as are liable to be broken. They enclose these leathern bottles in woollen sacks, because their beasts of carriage often fall down under their load, or cast it down on the sandy desert. This method of transporting the necessaries of life has another advantage: the skin bottles preserve them fresher, defend them against the ants and other insects, which cannot penetrate the skin, and prevent the dust, of which immense quantities are constantly moving about in the arid regions of Asia, and so fine that no coffer is impenetrable to it, from reaching them. It is for these reasons that provisions of every kind are enclosed in vessels made of the skins of these animals.[b]

"I know that weakness of memory is pleaded in excuse for this custom, but better minds would make better memories; such an excuse is unworthy of a man, and much more of a father, who may want vent indeed in addressing his children, but ought never to want matter. Like Elihu, he should be refreshed by speaking."—*Bp. Leighton On Reading Sermons.*

*b Paxton.*

**21, 22** (22) **accept,** *etc.*, pay deference to honour or age, by holding back any of the truth given me. To show partiality to

**but he will speak with**

B.C. *cir.* 1520.

**out partiality**

"We know, and what is better we feel inwardly, that religion is the basis of civil society, and the source of all good and of all comfort." — *E. Burke.*

*a Burder.*

"The wise man is but a clever infant spelling letters from a hierographical prophetic book, the lexicon of which lies in eternity."—*Carlyle.*

*b Cheever.*

no one. (22) **flattering titles,** wasting his time in the mere formalities of speech. **would soon,** or *will soon.* Therefore I speak as one who must soon render account. Elihu's tone is presumptuous if he spoke altogether of himself, but not if he spoke by the inspiration of God. He claimed a Divine impulse to utter his message, and declared he had the feelings of a prophet.

*Accepting persons* (*v.* 21).—The Hebrew word here used signifies to surname, or more properly to call a person by a name which does not strictly belong to him, and that generally in compliment or flattery. Mr. Scott on this passage informs us from Pococke, that "the Arabs make court to their superiors by carefully avoiding to address them by their proper names, instead of which they salute them with some title or epithet expressive of respect."[a] — *The pope and his ambassador.*—It is related of Pope Clement the XIV. (Ganganelli), that when he ascended the papal chair, the ambassadors of the several states represented at his court waited on him with their congratulations. When they were introduced, and bowed, he returned the compliment by bowing also; on which the master of the ceremonies told his highness that he should not have returned their salute. "O, I beg your pardon," said the good pontiff, "I have not been Pope long enough to forget good manners."[b]

## *CHAPTER THE THIRTY-THIRD.*

**Elihu continued**

**he addresses Job**

**1—3.** (1) **Job, I pray thee,** his words are directly addressed to Job, as an answer to his statements and inquiries. (2) **opened my mouth,** a phrase always denoting careful, deliberate utterances. **in my mouth,** or palate,[a] which tastes. Elihu speaks with discrimination, after trying or tasting his words. (3) **clearly,** or purely, sincerely. "Not distorting the truth through passion, as the friends had done."[b]

*Ruling the tongue.*—By evil speaking, though what is said be true, when no good purpose is immediately to be answered, the following hateful tempers are discovered to rule in the heart:—I. Want of regard to the high and loving authority of God, who has positively forbidden it. II. Want of brotherly love and charity, which would be grieved for the offences we know any one living to be in the commission of. III. Want of humility in our hearts, which would teach us that we are vile, too vile ourselves to complain of others, and dwell on their faults.[c]

*Evil speaking.*—"Is she a Christian?" asked a celebrated missionary in the East, of one of the converts who was speaking unkindly of a third party. "Yes, I think she is," was the reply. "Well, then, since Jesus loves her in spite of that, why is it that you can't?" The rebuke was felt, and the fault-finder instantly withdrew. Some days later, the same party was speaking to the missionary in a similar spirit about another person. The same question was put. "Is she a Christian?" In a half-triumphant tone, as if the speaker were beyond the reach of gunshot this time, it was answered, "I doubt if she truly is." "Oh! then," rejoined the missionary, "I think that you and I should feel such tender pity for her soul as to make any harsher feeling about her quite impossible."[d]

**4, 5.** (4) **made me,** not merely given me being, but made me in the sense of fitted me to give this answer. He hints that he

**he professes to be under**

*a* "The palate represents to the Heb. the judgment of a sound mind, which examines a thought impartially and thoroughly before it allows it to pass the tongue."—*Spk. Com.*

*b* 1 Thes. ii. 3, 4.

"One word should not be lost, when every word is precious. We gather up the dust and filings of gold. The ear should gather all that truth which the mouth scatters, and the heart should lay up as a treasure."—*Caryl.*

*c H. Venn.*

*d Fam. Treas.*

is a man as Job is, but claims to be a man under special inspiration.[a] (5) **in order**, array thyself before me, defend thyself as at a judgment seat.

*Influence of teachers.*—A certain philosopher was always talking very much to his friends about the garden in which he was in the habit of walking, and where he carried on his studies. At length one of them came to see him, and he found this extraordinary garden was a patch of ground about twice the size of the floor of his own room. "What!" said he, "is this your garden? It's not very broad." "No," said the philosopher, "it's not very broad; but it's a wondrous height!" And so I would say to you, Sunday-school teachers: your work in your class is not a very large one; but it's a wondrous height. It goes up to heaven: to conceive of it aright, it goes right out to eternity.[b]

**6. 7.** (6) **in God's stead**, trans. more correctly, "Behold, I am like thyself, of God."[a] I am in the same relation to God as thou art. **formed . . clay**, nipped from the clay, as when the potter nips off a piece of the clay to make a vessel. The idea of "daysman, mediator," does not seem to be required. But Elihu's idea is that instead of meeting Job's appeal by manifestations of terror,[b] God has sent him His message by a fellow man.[c] (7) **my terror**, is only that of a fellow mortal. **hand** pressure, burden.

*The prayers of a teacher.*—"Do you think," I asked, "that the Lord will let me see in this life the salvation of the souls for whom I pray?" "I cannot say as to that. When I was a child in the Sabbath school in the old country," she continued, "my faithful teacher used to say, 'I have prayed too much for my class for one of them to be lost.' I was a thoughtless girl at the time, and remember wondering at it, and thinking it a very self-confident remark. She was so sure, 'I shall have them all,' she would say. 'I shall say to Christ at the judgment, Here am I and the class Thou hast given me.'" "And were they all converted?" I asked. "Yes, she did not live to see it: but my eyes have seen it—the last of the sixteen gathered into the fold."[d]

**8—11.** (8) **surely**, *etc.* Elihu expresses the utmost astonishment at what he had heard Job say, but he is sure that he heard distinctly.[a] (9) **clean**, ch. ix. 17, 21, 30.[b] (10) **occasions against me**, treats me as an enemy, or with cruelty: finds grounds and occasions for hostile aversion.[c] (11) **stocks**, ch. xiii. 27.

*Old men in Scripture.*—There is something very affecting in the manner of speech which the sacred penmen adopt when they write of the aged. They deal with such people tenderly and respectfully. The Bible reverences its own precept. "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man." And especially, when anybody has occasion to speak of pious men, he does it most kindly. We are compelled to revere the feeble form of Isaac despite of his indecision, blindness, and trembling. Even dull old Barzillai is shown in so pleasant a light of contentment and repose that we admire him without at all thinking of his churlishness, and unconsciously turn over a few pages of the history to see what became of him. One expression there is which is used frequently in the Scriptures, yet is often passed over without notice, or remembered without appreciation—"Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness." One of the kings of ancient Israel actually appointed a band of

B.C. *cir.* 1520.

**Divine instruction**

*a* "In the earliest conclusion as of having been originated by the Spirit of God, and being endowed with life from the inbreathed breath of the Almighty, Elihu stands invincible before Job."—*Delitzsch.* r. 4. *Dr. J. Knight, Moyer Lec.* 264.
*b* *Scottish S. S. T. May.*

**and yet he will speak as a fellow man**

*a* LXX. "From clay am I formed as well as thou, and we are formed from the same." So Vulg. *Coverdale, etc.*
*b* Job xi. 1, 21.
*c* He. iv. 15.

"The end of wisdom is consultation and deliberation.—*Demosthenes.*

*d* *Witnessing for Jesus.*

**he says he has heard Job's self-vindication**

*a* "I do not venture to charge thee on *hearsay* evidence, or on suspicion, but on thine own words, spoken publicly."—*Wordsworth.*

*b* See also Job x. 7, xi. 4, xiii. 18, xvi. 17, xxiii. 10–13, xxvii. 6, xxix. 14.

*c* See Job vii. 12, 20, xii. 24, 27, xix. 16, 17, xvi. 9, xix. 11, xxx. 21, xxxi. 4, 25, 26.

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"There is an orde of mortals on the earth, who do become old in their youth, and die ere middle age."—*Byron.*

**he asserts that Job is unreasonable**

*a* Je. ii. 35.

*b* Job xiii. 3. xvi. 21, xxiii. 3—7.

*c* Heb. "*answereth not.*" to accept Job's challenge.

vv. 12, 13. *T. Steward*, 169.

"Perhaps there is in wisdom, gentle wisdom, that knows our frailties, therefore can forgive, some healing comfort for a guilty mind, some power to charm it into peace again, and bid it smile anew with right affection."—*Thomson.*

*d* *Charnock.*

**that God has various modes of speaking**

*a* Ps. lxii. 11; Pr. i. 24.

v. 14. *S. C. Wilks*, 206.

*b* *Dr. Thomas.*

"I have lived to see five sovereigns, and have been Privy Counsellor to four of them; I have seen the most remarkable things in foreign parts, and have been present at most State transactions for the last thirty years; and I have learned after so many years' experience that seriousness is the greatest

trained singers, "that they might praise the beauty of holiness." Perhaps beauty in a man is not a thing to be much talked about; but it is certainly interesting to discover that this particular expression has its repeated application to the presence of the aged. "The glory of young men is their strength: the beauty of old men is the grey head; the hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness." That is, religion is as lovely as it is needful in old age.

**12, 13.** (12) **not just,**[a] right, taking right views, in thus regarding God's treatment of you. **greater than man,** therefore may have reasons for His actions which are quite beyond human apprehension. *Spk. Com.* prefers the rendering "I will answer thee, for God is too great to be questioned by man." (13) **strive,** desire to argue the matter of His dealings with you.[b] **giveth . . matters,**[c] Job was fretted because God did not explain His dealings. Enough for man to know it is God who does it.

*The wisdom of God.*—A Christian's graces want their lustre when they are destitute of the guidance of wisdom; mercy is a feebleness, and justice a cruelty, paitence a timorousness, and courage a madness, without the conduct of wisdom. So the patience of God would be cowardice, His power an oppression, His justice a tyranny, without wisdom as a spring, and holiness as the rule. No attribute of God could shine with a due lustre and brightness without it. Power is a great perfection, but wisdom a greater. The pilot is more valuable because of his skill than the galley-slave because of his strength, and the conduct of a general more estimable than the might of a private soldier. Generals are chosen more by their skill to guide than their strength to act. What a clod is a man without prudence! what a nothing would God be without it! This is the salt that gives relish to all other perfections in a creature; this is the jewel in the ring of all the excellencies of the Divine nature, and holiness is the splendour of that jewel.[d]

**14. once,**[a] by the judgment. That is God's voice, to which men should give ear. **twice,** by repetition of judgments; or, in other ways than judgment; by secret messages heard in men's souls. Elihu says God does answer men, only men want the answer in their *own way*, so cannot perceive it as spoken in *God's way*.

*The philosophy and use of dreams.*—I. Their philosophy. **1.** What originates the dream? often the state of the body; 2. Why do thoughts take such grotesque forms in dreams? the mind in sleep is left uncontrolled by the will. II. Their uses. 1. They serve to throw some light on our spiritual constitution; 2. They are sometimes the organs of Divine communication.[b]

*God in dreams.*—A lady, a member of Mr. Bull's church at Newport, while staying at Bath, hired a female servant named Saunders. She had imbibed Socinian views, and consequently objected to attend his ministry. It was proposed that she should first hear him, and then, if she did not approve his sentiments, she might go to church. Before leaving Bath she had a remarkable dream. She thought she was walking in a meadow by the banks of a river. It suddenly overflowed: the waters rose higher and higher, and she was without power to escape. Her destruction seemed inevitable, when, on a sudden, a tall figure stood at her side, having the appearance and wearing the dress of a

minister; he directed her attention to certain stepping-stones she had not seen before, at the same time uttering these words, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee." The feeling of joy at her deliverance awoke her. She came to Newport, and as she had promised, went to hear Mr. Bull; and great was her astonishment when she looked towards the pulpit and saw the very person standing there who had appeared to her in her dream. Indeed, she was so overcome that she was incapable of paying attention to the former part of the service. But, having somewhat recovered her composure of mind, she listened with a strange feeling of expectation for the text, and again she heard the words, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee: and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee." She no longer objected to go to the meeting house; for that sermon, preached under circumstances to her so striking, was the means of her conversion to God.[c]

B.C. *cir.* 1720.

wisdom, temperance, the best physic, and a good conscience, the best estate."—*Sir J. Mason.*

"Strange state of being! (for 'tis still to be) senseless to feel, and wild seal'd eyes to see."—*Byron.*

c *Memorials of Rev. W. Bull.*

**15—17.** (15) **dream,**[a] one of the earliest modes of Div. communication. **slumberings,** the lighter sleep with which dreams are usually associated. (16) **openeth,** uncovereth.[b] **sealeth,** as sign of confirmation and completeness. **instruction,** or admonition. (17) **withdraw,** *etc.*,[c] this is quite a different explanation of suffering to that the friends had given, or Job had reached. Elihu says God teaches that it bears relation to moral training and culture. **hide pride,** cover it, so that it may not tempt.

**as by means of dreams**

a Comp. Job iv. 12—17.

b Ru. iv. 4, marg.; 1 Sa. ix. 15, xx. 2; 2 Sa. vii. 27.

c Comp. cases of midnight visions withdrawing men from their purposes, as Ge. xx. 3, xxi. 24.

*Divine action in dreams.*—Many of our readers will remember a case which filled the newspapers some years ago. One point in it, which was only produced because it was historically necessary to complete the case, engaged our attention greatly at the time. A young woman was murdered in a barn, and buried under the floor. She was thought by all who concerned themselves about her to be still alive in another place; and the murder remained not only undiscovered but unsuspected at the time; when the young woman's mother was warned repeatedly in a dream to search the barn. She did so: the murder was thus discovered, and the murderer (Corder) condemned and executed. Now, from what other cause than a supernatural action upon the mind of the mother could this dream have been produced?[d]

*cc.* 14—16. *L. Abernethy, on Dreams*, 117.

*cc.* 14—17. *J. Jowett, Lect.* 308.

d *Dr. Kitto.*

**18—20.** (18) **soul,** life. **pit,**[a] grave. **by the sword,** from violent death. "Passing away by the sword." (19) **chastened,**[b] this is another voice of God. This is disciplinary: a part of spiritual culture. **multitude,** *etc.*, "and with the unceasing conflict of his limbs."[c] (20) **dainty meat,** meat of desire: such as he specially loved. By reason of sickness it had become nauseous.

**and by afflictions**

a Ps. xxx. 3.

b De. viii. 5; Ps. xciv. 12, cxix. 67, 71; 1 Co. xi. 32; He. xii. 5—11.

c *Delitzsch.*

*Various views of afflictions.*—No man is more unhappy than the man who is never in adversity. In other words, the greatest affliction in life is never to be afflicted. "If my property had not perished," says an ancient philosopher, "I should have perished." Many of the servants of God have been enriched for eternity by being made poor for a time. Our bodies need physic; our trees need pruning; our metals need the furnace; and our minds need the discipline of affliction. Afflictions are blessings to us, when we can bless God for afflictions. Sanctified afflictions are spiritual promotions. Under the equitable Master whom we serve, we do

"Surely happiness is reflective, like the light of heaven; and every countenance bright with smiles, and glowing with innocent enjoyment, is a mirror transmitting to others the rays of a supreme

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a "I ever-shining benevolence." — *Washington Irving.*

**which may seem in their severity to threaten life**

a "Angels of death commissioned by God to end man's life. (2 Sa. xxiv. 16; Ps. lxxviii. 49.) Or the death-pains personified"—*Fausset.*

b *C. A. Hulbert, M.A.*

c *Ven. E. Bather, M.A.*

If you would be miserable, look within. If you would be distracted, look around. If you would be happy, look up.

**the Divine ransom**

a "One angel stands apart fr. all others in the O. T.; his office, rank, and apparently his nature are represented as peculiar; he bears the Holy Name."—*Spk. Com.*

Comp. Hag. i. 13; Mal. ii. 7; Re. i. 20.

b Ge. xlii. 23; 2 Chr. xxxii. 31, marg.; Isa. xliii. 27.

c "What is for his profit."—*Delitzsch.*

d Heb. *copher*, a covering; fr. *caphar*, to cover, to make satisfaction and atonement.

not suffer a single affliction that hath not for its foundation either His justice, which corrects us for our sins, or His mercy, which would prevent the faults into which we are liable to fall. There is not one affliction, therefore, which is not either a just chastisement or a merciful preservation.

**21, 22.** (21) **consumed away,** this expression shows that Elihu was taking such a case of extreme suffering as was that of Job. **cannot be seen,** too painful a sight for any to look at. (22) **near unto the grave,** sickness may gain such a hold that life is despaired of. **destroyers,**[a] death and his attendants and precursors, the pangs preceding dissolution.

*The Gospel preached by Elihu* (*vv.* 22—27).—In the text, compared with the preceding and following verses, we discover six states of the sinner. I. A state of ruin. II. A state of grace. III. A state of justification. IV. A state of sanctification. V. A state of peace with God. VI. A state of glory.[b]—*The right improvement of sickness or other distress* (*vv.* 22—24).—These words have in them—I. A case of distress supposed II. An intimation that it will be well to call in a competent adviser under it. III. They suggest what in general such an adviser will have to do. IV. They declare the consequences, through the Divine mercy, if sound counsel be followed.[c]

*Divinity taught by affliction.*—A minister was recovering from a dangerous illness, when one of his friends addressed him thus:—"Sir, though God seems to be bringing you up from the gates of death, yet it will be a long time before you will sufficiently retrieve your strength, and regain vigour enough of mind to preach as usual." The good man answered, "You are mistaken, my friend; for this six weeks' illness has taught me more divinity than all my past studies and all my ten years' ministry put together."

**23, 24.** (23) **messenger,** the word is usually trans. *angel*, and this may properly be referred to the Angel of the Covenant, the Angel Jehovah.[a] Elihu's primary reference may, however, be to himself as Divinely sent to explain God's ways with Job. **interpreter,** Heb. *melits.*[b] One able to explain the meaning of the affliction, and the way of improving it. **among a thousand,** a man rarely to be found: of rare intelligence, fidelity, and skill. **uprightness,**[c] or his right way; what may restore him to a state of uprightness. (24) **then he,** *i.e.* God. **and saith,** some think that these following words are those of the mediator. It is, however, more simply taken as God's commission to him. **to the pit,** fig. for the grave. Death had seemed the only issue of Job's afflictions. **ransom,** that which covers sin.[d]

*The benefit of visiting the sick.*—I. The office of those who visit the sick. It is to show the righteousness of God—1. In punishing sin; 2. In His way of pardoning sin. II. The benefit arising from the faithful discharge of this office. 1. Even to the bodies of men: 2. More especially to their soul. Reflections:—(1) How honourable an office is that of a visitor to the sick; (2) How blind are they who are averse to have such pious instructors introduced to their sick and dying friends. How desirable it is to support such a society as this.[e]—*The Gospel according to Job.*—Let us notice—I. The scope and grandeur of its disclosures. II. The great argument, or main purpose of the book. III. In this Book of Job there are the foreshadowing of Christ and His

salvation of very remarkable character. Let us now look at some of the anticipative elements in this anticipative go pel taught by Elihu. (1) Man should be humble in the same ratio as God is inscrutable; (2) That Christ's sacrifice and intercession are all-prevailing in the salvation of the sinner; (3) That Christ's sacrifice is the great theme of the ministry; (4) That prayer and profession are essential to the Christian life.[a]

*Delivered from the pit* (*v.* 24).—A species of capital punishment which serves to illustrate the sacred text, is the pit into which the condemned persons were precipitated. The Athenians, and particularly the tribe Hippothoontis, frequently condemned offenders to the pit. It was a dark, noisome hole, and had sharp spikes at the top, that no criminal might escape: and others at the bottom, to pierce and torment those unhappy persons that were cast in. Similar to this place was the Lacedemonian *Kaiadas*, into which Aristomenes, the Messenian, being cast, made his escape in a very surprising manner. This mode of punishment is of great antiquity; for the speakers in the Book of Job make several allusions to it. Thus, in the speech of Elihu, "He keepeth back his soul from the pit, and his life from perishing by the sword." "Then is He gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom." "He will deliver his soul from going down into the pit, and his life shall see the light." The allusions in the Book of Psalms are numerous and interesting; thus the Psalmist prays, "Be not silent to me; lest if Thou be silent to me, I become like them that go down into the pit." "Let them be cast into deep pits, that they rise not up again." The following allusion occurs in the prophecies of Isaiah:—"The captive exile nasteneth, that he may be loosed, and that he should not die in the pit, nor that his bread should fail."[g]

**25, 26.** (25) **flesh,** mentioned bec. Job's was a disease of the skin and flesh. **a child's,** or childhood.[c] **days . . youth,** time of bodily health and vigour. (26) **favourable,** Job had complained that he prayed in vain.[b] **see . . joy,** rejoice in the Div. favour and fellowship; shall not even seem to be under a frown. **his righteousness,** deal with him according to his conduct: again regard and treat him as a righteous man.

*Preservation of health.*—Socrates used to say that it was pleasant to grow old with good health and a good friend, and he might have reason; a man may be content to live while he is no trouble to himself or his friends, but, after that, it is hard if he be not content to die. I knew and esteemed a person abroad, who used to say a man must be a mean wretch who desired to live after threescore years old. But so much, I doubt, is certain, that in life, as in wine, he that will drink it good, must not draw it to the dregs. Where this happens, one comfort of age may be, that whereas younger men are usually in pain whenever they are not in pleasure, old men find a sort of pleasure when they are out of pain; and as young men often lose or impair their present enjoyments by craving after what is to come, by vain hopes, or fruitless fears, so old men relieve the wants of their age by pleasing reflections upon what is past. Therefore, men in the health and vigour of their age should endeavour to fill their lives with reading, with travel, with the best conversation, and the worthiest actions, either in public or private stations; that they may have

B.C. *cir.* 1529.

ee. 23, 24. *W. Perkins*, Wks. iii. 429. *M. Poole, Morn. Ex.* i. 111; *J. Alting, Op.* 2, pars. 2. 174.

e. 24. *Dr. J. Gill*, i. 514.

f *C. Simeon, M.A.*

*g Douglas Alport.* "A mower with a good scythe will do more in one day than another that hath a bad one can do in two; every workman knoweth the benefit of having his tools in order; and every traveller knows the difference between a cheerful and a tired horse. And they that have tried health and sickness know what a help it is in every work of God, to have a healthful body and cheerful spirits, and an alacrity and promptitude to obey the mind." —*Baxter.*

*g Paxton.*

**the renewal of youth**

*a* Comp. Naaman, 2 Ki. v. 10–14; see also Jno. iii. 3–7.

*b* Job xxiii. 3, 8, 9.

"The sense is, he will burn his incense unto God, who will be well pleased thereby." —*Wordsworth.*

Ps. l. 15, Je. xxxiii. 3; Mat. vii. 7, 8.

*c Sir W. Temple.*

"A auspicious health appear'd on zephyr's wing; she seem'd a cherub most divinely bright, more soft than air, than blushing morning

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light. Hail! blooming goddess! thou propitious power, whose blessings next to life implore; with so much lustre your bright looks endear, that cottages are courts when these appear. Mankind, as you vouchsafe to smile or frown, find ease in chains or anguish in a crown."—*Garth.*

*d H. W. Beecher.*

**God waits for human penitence**

*a* "It has not been recompensed to me according to my deserts, favour instead of right is come upon me."—*Delitzsch.*

*b* "Alluding to the three ways in wh. God appeals to the afflicted, *v.* 14. 1. By visions. *vv.* 15—17; 2. By afflictions, *vv.* 19—22; 3. By a messenger, *v.* 23."—*Fausset.*

*c* Is. xxxviii. 17; Ps. lvi. 13

*v.* 27. *H. Marriott,* iii 219.

*d R. Eden, M.A.*

"Try what repentance can—what can it not? Yet what can it, when one cannot repent? O wretched state! O bosom, black as death! O limed soul! that, struggling to be free, art more engaged. Help, angels, make assay! Bow, stubborn knees! and, heart, with

something agreeable left to feed on when they are old, by pleasing remembrances.[c]—*Studying the laws of health.*—The written Bible is not the only volume that God has given us. There are two Bibles. One is a printed book, and the other is nature. And the laws of God in nature are as much laws as those in the printed book. You are as much bound to find out and obey the former as the latter. The pains and penalties of violation are just as certain in the one case as in the other. And if God has imposed upon you the duty of educating a child for another world, and if that education is associated with the child's bodily condition, you are bound to know how to bring the child up healthily. Much attention should be given by parents to this subject, for many of the infelicities of children spring from their physical state. Many and many a child has been spoiled by reason of wrong training in this regard. The life of many a child has been a fruitless endeavour to overcome the mischiefs done to his health through the ignorance of parents.[d]

**27—30.** (27) **he,** *i.e.* the restored penitent. **looketh,** should be, *will sing* before men. **say,** this is his confession in his song. **have sinned,** *had* sinned. **profited me not,** *lit.* "he has not requited me according to my deserts."[a] (28) **will deliver,** as marg. *hath delivered.* **see the light,** refeshes itself in the light of the Divine countenance. (29) **oftentimes,** twice and thrice.[b] (30) **his soul,** or life: comp. *v.* 28.[c]

*God waiting to discover repentance, and to accept the penitent* (*v.* 27).—I. The first truth that meets us in these words is this, that God's eye is fixed upon every individual in the family of man. II. That for which God especially looks upon men is to discover the full confession of sin. True contrition includes—1. An acknowledgment of sin's essential guilt; 2. It will explicitly confess the fact of sin; 3. It will confess its disappointing and deceptive folly. Learn—(1) To view confession of sin as a duty of the first importance; (2) That each one has reason to make the confession of sin in the text his own."[d]

*Delayed repentance* (*v.* 27).—"Ah! Mr. Hervey," said a dying man, "the day in which I ought to have worked is over, and now I see a horrible night approaching, bringing with it the blackness of darkness for ever. Woe is me! When God called I refused. Now I am in sore anguish, and yet this is but the beginning of sorrows. I shall be destroyed with an everlasting destruction."—*Repentance—known by its fruits.*—Repentance, when genuine, is the sorrow, not of a slave, but of a child, more out of love than fear; more because God is offended than hell deserved. The Gospel is a call to repentance; it comes with quickening motives to it; for it gives clear and strong convictions of sin, clearer and stronger than those under nature and the law. It produces strong arguments for, and inducements to it; for it reveals Christ crucified for sin, and those hearts must be hard indeed that will not be softened by His blood shed for it. It works repentance; for it is not only a light to discover it, but a covenant will to give it, and teaches it as a worker as well as a tutor—by efficacy, as well as by doctrine. It pronounces a curse upon the neglect of it. The Gospel has a terrible voice, as well as the law—a curse for our sins (except ye repent, ye shall perish)—a curse more terrible than that of the law; there is no condemnation like unto that in the court of mercy. Many find a

reason for presumption in the case of the dying malefactor, who lived a thief but died a saint, and, when crucified on Mount Calvary, ascended from a cross to a crown: but let us look a little closely into his case, and examine the nature of his repentance. He rebuked his fellow-thief and companion in sin and suffering. "Dost thou not fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?" He owned his own guilt, became his own judge, condemned himself, made good the evidence, justified and approved the sentence passed against him: "We are justly condemned," said he, "for we receive the due reward of our deeds." He called Christ "Lord," and this when suffering as a slave. He owned Him as God, for He prayed to Him, "Remember me," and this when the scribes and Pharisees mocked at His prayers, "Let us see whether Elias will come to save Him." He believed in Him for salvation, and this when the scribes and Pharisees said he could not save Himself: "He saved others, Himself He cannot save." He honoured Him as King of heaven: "Remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom." He proclaimed His innocency. "This man hath done nothing amiss;" and this when He was accused of blasphemy, and suffering the death of a malefactor, numbered among transgressors, and crucified between them, as if He were the chief of them! Such was this man's faith, and it was crowned with assurance of heaven, ratified and confirmed by the promise, "Verily, I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise."[c]

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strings of steel, ... shews of the new-born babe—all may be well." — *Shakespeare.*

"Upon our removal hence, there will be no place for repentance, nor any possibility of returning unto God by penitence. In this life, or nowhere, must be laid the hope of eternal life: here, or nowhere, must our adoration of the true God, and the fruits of our faith, secure to us an interest in the kingdom of heaven." — *Tertullian.*

[c] *F. Fuller.*

**31—33.** (31) **mark well,** this expression indicates a division in the speech: a break, which may afford Job an opportunity of reply. **hold thy peace,** if thou hast nothing to say in answer I will proceed. (32) **desire to justify thee,**[a] do thee justice; do not therefore misconstrue my words. Though showing Job his error, Elihu seeks to free him from the cruel imputations of the friends (33) **teach thee,** by yet further explanations, **wisdom,**[b] the true view of the character and dealings of God: and the true submission to Him.

**Elihu professes to wish to justify Job**

[a] "Job had sought to justify himself before God, he needed to be shown that he could be justified only by seeking for righteousness in God, not in himself."—*Wordsworth.* Ro. x. 3; Phil. iii. 7—9.

[b] 1 Co. i. 30.

*Repentance not censurable.*—If a man has murdered his friend and benefactor, and if, when brought to repentance, we find him labouring under the heaviest sorrow, it is not his repentance that we condemn, but the crime which brought this distress upon him. In like manner the griefs of the penitent are to be charged, not to the account of religion, as so many drawbacks from its felicity, but to the account of sin, as so many additions to the dreadful catalogue of its mischiefs, and pains, and plagues. In repentance itself, considered as contrition for sin and hatred to it, arising from a timely discovery of our guilt and danger, there is no ground for pain, but much for gratitude and satisfaction. It never needeth to be repented of.[c]—*Death-bed repentance.*—Not long since, a Congregationalist preacher, who had been forty-one years in the ministry, said: "I have never, in all my experience as a pastor, known of a single instance in which a repentance on what was supposed to be a death-bed proved to be of any value whatever after the person recovered." This was strong language. We involuntarily exclaimed, "Have you known many such cases?" "More than I dare remember." "And as many more, perhaps, where the person died." "Yes, fully as many more." "Then did not the bitter failure of these death-bed repentances

[c] "'Tis ever thus with noble minds, if chance they slide to folly; remorse stings deeper, and relentless conscience pours more of gall into the bitter cup of their severe repentance." — *Mason.*

Repentance without amendment is like continual pumping in a ship without stopping the leaks.' —*Palmer.*

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to bear the tests of time shake your confidence in their value under the tests of eternity?' "It did—it does," said the clergyman, with tears in his eyes. The conversation made a deep impression on our mind. It was strong evidence, from a quarter in which we least looked for it, of the utter paltriness and insufficiency of fear as a motive when brought to bear upon decisions in spiritual things.[d]

*d S. S. Messenger.*

## *CHAPTER THE THIRTY-FOURTH.*

**1—3.** (1) **furthermore,** Elihu at once renewed his address, as Job showed no disposition to make a reply.[a] (2) **ye wise men,** not simply Job and his friends, but those in the circle of spectators and listeners, which, as is assumed, has assembled round the disputants. Or a general appeal to men of sound judgment.[b] **have knowledge,** the practical knowledge of experience. (3) **mouth,** or *palate:* ch. xxxiii. 2: the sense of taste belongs especially to the palate.

*A word in season.*—A minister was some time ago speaking of one whom he had many years known as a consistent and exemplary Christian, and observed that the first serious impressions were made on his mind by a word dropped from the lips of a stranger. In his youth he was driving a number of cattle to a fair, when some of the animals becoming unruly, he uttered a profane exclamation, and swore in a manner that is, alas, too common. A stranger, on horseback, who happened to be passing by at the moment, said to him, "My friend, those brutes have no souls, they are not capable of damnation; but you have an immortal soul, and your curses must fall on yourself." The stranger rode off; but his words were riveted in the mind of the youth, and proved the means of awakening a train of thought and feeling the most salutary and profitable. He sought the means of grace and the way of salvation, and became sober, circumspect, and useful. Perhaps the stranger may never know, in this world, the good effects of his well-timed reproof; but let others be encouraged thus to drop a word which may prove as "bread cast upon the waters, to be seen after many days."

**4—6.** (4) **choose,** lit. *prove by means of a touchstone,*[a] find out what is right. **good,** *i.e.* befitting to the occasion; what view of this difficult matter may worthily be taken.[b] (5) **righteous,** not absolutely perfect, but righteous in respect of the accusations made by the friends against him. **my judgment,** or my right.[c] The right of the righteous to temporal prosperity. Job regarded God as acting towards him in mere *sovereignty.* (6) **lie,** by making myself out to be what I know I am not. **wound,** lit. *arrow:* fig. for disease with which he was smitten. **without transgression,** as an immediate and adequate cause for such smiting.[d]

*Repentance and self-righteousness (a Persian legend).*—Jesus, while on earth, was once entertained in the cell of a dervise of eminent reputation for sanctity. In the same city dwelt a youth sunk in every sin, "whose heart was so black that Satan himself shrunk back from it in horror;" he appearing before the cell of the monk, as smitten by the very presence of the Divine Prophet, began to lament deeply the wickedness of his life past, and

**the ear trieth words**

*a* "Some of the language of Elihu in this chap. has been censured as harsh and unfeeling towards Job. The words of truth, though they might seem to be stern, were also words of love."—*Wordsworth.*

*b* 1 Co. x. 15.

'These books teach holy sorrow and contrition, and penitence. Is it become an art, then? A trick that lazy, dull, luxurious gownmen can teach us to do over? I'll no more on't. I've more real anguish in my heart than all their pedant discipline e'er knew."—*Rowe.*

**Job charged with self-righteousness**

*a* Jno. vii. 24; Ro. xii. 2, 1 Co. vi. 5; Phil. i. 10.

*b* "The wise man will contend not for victory but for truth."—*Robinson.*

*c* Comp. Job xiii. 18, xxiii. 10, xxvii. 2.

*d* Job xvi. 17. "Let us select among the conflicting sentiments advanced, what will stand the test of examination."—*Fausset.*

shedding abundant tears to implore pardon and grace. The monk indignantly interrupted him, demanding how he dared to appear in his presence and in that of God's holy prophet: assured him that for him it was in vain to seek forgiveness; and in proof how inexorably he considered his lot was fixed for hell, exclaimed, "My God, grant me but one thing, that I may stand far from this man on the judgment-day." On this Jesus spoke, "It shall be even so: the prayer of both is granted. This sinner has sought mercy and grace, and has not sought them in vain—his sins are forgiven; his place shall be in paradise at the last day. But this monk has prayed that he may never stand near this sinner—his prayer, too, is granted; hell shall be his place, for there this sinner shall never come."[e]—*Repentance, or what?*—It is said of a Mr. T. and three of his associates, that, to enliven a company, they once undertook to mimic a celebrated preacher. The proposition was highly gratifying to all present, and a wager was agreed upon, to inspire each individual with a desire of excelling in this impious attempt. That their jovial auditors might adjudge the prize to the most adroit performer, it was concluded that each should open the Bible, and hold forth from the first text that should present itself to his eye. Accordingly, three in their turns mounted the table, and entertained their wicked companions, at the expense of everything sacred. When they had exhausted their little stock of buffoonery, it devolved on Mr. T. to close this very irreverent scene. Much elated, and confident of success, he exclaimed, as he ascended the table, "I shall beat you all!" When the Bible was handed to him, he had not the slightest preconception what text of Scripture he should make the subject of his banter. However, by the guidance of an unerring Providence, it opened at the above passage,—"Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." No sooner had he uttered the words than his mind was affected in a very extraordinary manner. The sharpest pangs of conviction now seized him, and conscience denounced vengeance upon his soul. In a moment he was favoured with a clear view of his subject, and divided his discourse more like a divine than one who never thought on religious topics except for the purpose of ridicule. He found no deficiency of matter, no want of utterance; and he has been frequently heard to declare, "If ever I preached in my life by the assistance of the Spirit of God, it was at that time." The impression which the subject made upon his mind had such an effect upon his manner, that the most ignorant and profane could not but perceive that what he had spoken was with the greatest sincerity.[f]

**7—9.** (7) **drinketh up,** an image taken from the camel.[a] "Give one's self up to mockery with delight, and find satisfaction in it."[b] **scorning,**[c] blasphemy; to Elihu Job's language seemed daring and irreverent. (8) **goeth in company,** makes common cause with, by taking up their sentiments. (9) **profiteth,** *etc.*, Job had meant so far as the providences of this world are concerned. This seemed to intimate that God did not actually govern righteously.[d] All men are oppressed at times with the anomalous distribution of human destinies.

*Thirsting for scorn* (*v.* 7).—Of a man who does not care for contempt or hatred, it is said, "He drinks up their hatred like water." When a man is every way superior to his enemies, "Ah,

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[e] *Saadi*

"What will this penitence not move thee? Know there is a rose-lipp'd seraph at the throne on high, who ever bends his holy ear to earth to mark the voice of penitence, to hear her solemn sighs, to tune them to his harp, and echo them in divine music up to the throne of grace."—*Mason.*

"Delay no time; go quickly—get thee alone—wear thy knees, wring thy hands, beat thy breast, know as little measure in thy sorrow as thou didst in thy sins. The Lord will not despise a 'contrite heart;' and though He let thee kneel long, He will have mercy at the last. Learn of Jacob to wrestle with God, and cry with a fervent spirit,—'I will not let Thee go unless Thou bless me.'"—*E. Jocelin.*

"People say they cannot repent. The answer may sound harshly, but our Saviour supplies it—they can perish; and yet more terribly, they 'shall perish.'"

[f] *Whitecross*

and with being a scorner

[a] Job xv. 16.

[b] *Delitzsch.*

[c] Scorn, fr. Fr. *escorner*, to break off the horn. Fr. l. *ex*, from; *cornu*, horn. Extreme and passionate contempt. See Ps. i. 1.

[d] Job ix. 24, 30.

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xxi. 7. xxiv. 1; Mal iii 14.

*g Roberts.* "Contempt naturally implies a man's esteeming of himself greater than the person whom he contemns: he, therefore, that slights, that contemns, an affront, is properly superior to it; and he conquers an injury who conquers his resentment of it. Socrates being kicked by an ass, did not think it a revenge proper for Socrates to kick the ass again." — *Dr. South.*

*h Westminster Review.*

**what one sows he shall reap**

*a* Ge. xviii. 25; De. xxxii. 4; Ro. ix. 14; Ja. i. 13.

"Trans. *v.* 10. 'Far be it from God to do evil, and the Almighty to act wrongfully.'"—*Delitzsch.*

*b* Ps. lxii. 12; Je. xxxii. 19; 2 Co. v. 10; Re. xxii. 12.

*vv.* 10—12. *Dr. S. Clarke*, i. 369.

*c Dr. Beaumont.* "That which the air is in the elementary world, the sun in the celestial, the soul in the intelligible, justice is the same in the civil. It is the air which all afflicted desire to breathe; the sun which dispelleth all clouds; the soul which

he drinks them up like water." "He is a man of wonderful talents, for he drinks up science as water." Thus, Elihu wished to show that Job had hardened himself, and was insensible to scorn, for he had swallowed it as water.[g]—*The caricaturist.*—The caricaturist is one of the best of historical commentators. The striking peculiarities of the age, which are often but dimly seen in the pages of history, and carefully thrown into shadow in historical pictures, are always distinctly mirrored in the sketches of caricature, which has all the truth and vividness of a reflector; with permanence, instead of evanescence, in its forms and colours. It gives enduring shapes to the jests of the hour. It shows us the great men of a period as they were seen and laughed at by their contemporaries; and by enabling us to feel the emotions they inspired when alive, and enjoy the mirth their conduct or appearance suggested, lets us into the understanding of their characters, both more truly and more amusingly than biography. As one of the vehicles for the expression of opinion, caricature partakes of the nature of discussion, and in so far it is fraught with the advantages of discussion. This much we have thought it necessary to say in favour of this curious and neglected subject, though, to justify the attention we intend to bestow on it, we might have contented ourselves with observing that caricature is a department of art in which much talent and invention of a rich and remarkable kind have been displayed in portraying the manners and follies, the very spirit and features, of every stage and state of society.[h]

**10–12.** (10) **understanding,** marg. *heart.* **far be it,** *i.e.* it is a thing profane even to think of. **wickedness,** injustice. Elihu's point is, that man ought to believe that God's ways are just, *because they are His.*[a] (11) **the work,** put for the proper issue and reward of work. "Recompense is exactly proportioned to man's deeds."[b] (12) **surely,** this may be settled as a first principle. The idea of iniquity (inequality) is inconsistent with the idea of God.

*The sword of justice.*—When the Son of God was made of a woman, and made under the law, there was heard the most awful voice that ever was heard in the universe yet: "Awake, O sword, against the Man that is My fellow, and smite the shepherd"—smite Him! When there was a Man in the world that was Jehovah's fellow there was some one who could magnify the law, in smiting whom justice could obtain its demands. The sword of justice smote Him, struck Him, cut Him. The sword of justice had a commission to smite the Man that was Jehovah's fellow; it smote Him in Bethlehem; it smote Him all along the highway of His life, even to Calvary. On Calvary the strokes of the sword fell heavy; the glances of that sword then darkened the sun; the strokes of the sword shook earth, shook hell; it kept smiting and smiting the Man that was God's fellow, till at last He cried, "It is finished." Then the sword fell down at the foot of the cross, hushed, lulled, pacified; and it lay there till the third hallowed morning, when it was found changed into a sceptre of mercy; and that sceptre of mercy has been waving among mankind ever since.[c]—*Justice must be done.*—People are perpetually squabbling about what will be best to do, or easiest to do, or advisablest to do, or profitablest to do; but they never, so far as I hear them talk, ever ask what is just to do. And it is the law of

heaven that you shall not be able to judge what is wise or easy, unless you are first resolved to judge what is just, and to do it. That is the one thing constantly reiterated by our Master—the order of all others that is given oftenest—"Do justice and judgment." That's your Bible order; that's the "service of God," not praying or psalm-singing. You are told, indeed, to sing psalms when you are merry, and to pray when you need anything: and by the perversion of the evil spirit we get to think that praying and psalm-singing are "service." If a child finds itself in want of anything, it runs and asks its father for it—does it call that doing its father a service? If it begs for a toy or a piece of cake, does it call that serving its father? That with God is prayer, and He likes to hear it: He likes you to ask Him for things when you want them, but he doesn't call that "serving Him." Begging is not serving; God likes mere beggars as little as you do - He likes honest servants, not beggars. So when a child loves its father very much, and is very happy, it may sing little songs about him; but it doesn't call that serving its father; neither is singing songs about God serving God. It is enjoying ourselves, if it's anything: most probably, it is nothing; but if it's anything, it is serving ourselves, not God. And yet we are impudent enough to call our beggings and chantings "Divine service:" we say Divine service will be "performed" (that's our word—the form of it gone through) at eleven o'clock. Alas! unless we perform Divine service in every willing act of life, we never perform it at all. The one Divine work, the one ordered sacrifice, is to do justice; and it is the last we are ever inclined to do. Anything rather than that! As much charity as you choose, but no justice. "Nay," you will say, "charity is greater than justice." Yes, it is greater: it is the summit of justice—it is the temple of which justice is the foundation. But you can't have the top without the bottom; you cannot build upon charity. You must build upon justice, for this main reason, that you have not at first charity to build with. It is the last reward of good work. Do justice to your brother (you can do that, whether you love him or not), and you will come to love him. But do injustice to him because you don't love him, and you will come to hate him. It is all very fine to think you can build upon charity to begin with, but you will find all you have got to begin with begins at home, and is essentially love of yourself.[d]

**13—15.** (13) **given him a charge,**[a] so as to make Him a servant who could prove unfaithful. God has sole authority: He is God alone. (14) **upon man,** it should be *upon Him*; i.e. if God thought only of Himself all things that have breath would perish, for all depend on Him.[b] But absolute power in God is joined with unselfish love. (15) **all flesh,** *etc.*, bec. by the breath of God alone man lives. God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.[c]

*Justice from God —*

What wouldst thou have, good fellow?
Justice, madam.
Oh, ambitious beggar, wouldst thou have that
That lives not in the world?
Why, all the undelved mines cannot buy
An ounce of justice, 'tis a jewel so inestimable.
I tell thee God hath engross'd all justice in His hands,
And there is none but what comes from Him.[d]

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giveth life to all things. The unhappiness is, it is more found on the pages of writers than in the manners of the living. To be just is to be all that which an honest man may be, since justice is to give every one what appertaineth to him." —*N. Causon.*

"Sophistry may perplex truth, ingenuity may warp the decrees of justice, and ridicule may raise an undeserved laugh, but where free inquiry prevails, errors will be corrected, justice will be revered, and ridicule will be returned on those who have abused its influence."—*Ennius.*

"Justice is the great but simple principle, and the whole secret of success in all government, as absolutely essential to the training of an infant as to the control of a mighty nation."—*Simms.*

*d Ruskin.*

none can limit the Almighty

*a* "Committed the earth to his charge, as a superior commits a charge to a subordinate." —*Robinson.*

*b* Our version gives a sense out of harmony with the context. "If God regarded man with enmity, he would certainly perish." *c* Ps. xc. 3—10, civ. 29; Ge. ii. 7; Ac. xvii. 28.

*d Kyd.*

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**the impartiality of God**

*a* "Right and government are indeed mutually conditioned: without right everything would fall into anarchy and confusion."—*Delitzsch.*

*b* *Maurer*, following the LXX. and Vulg., reads, "It is not fit to accuse of injustice Him who says to a king, Thou art wicked; to princes, Ye are ungodly."

*c* De. x. 17; 2 Chr. x. 7; Ac. x. 34; Ro. ii. 11; Ga. ii. 6; Eph. vi. 9; Col. iii. 25; 1 Pe. i. 17.

*d* *Cumberland.*

When great presents were sent to Epaminondas, the celebrated Theban general, he used to observe: "If the thing you desire be good, I will do it without any bribe, even because it is good; if it be not honest, I will not do it for all the goods in the world." He was so great a contemner of riches, that when he died he left not enough to discharge the expenses of his funeral.

*e* *Dr. J. Todd.*

**God has full control over all men**

**16—19.** (16) **hear this,** the further matter of fact that God does deal with men impartially. (17) **govern,** marg. *bind.* "Is it also possible that an enemy of right should govern?"[a] **most just,** the just. the mighty. Him in whom might and justice are one: or the All-just. (18) **is it fit,** or becoming.[b] **princes,** regarded as king's representatives. (19) **accepteth,** *etc.*, is therefore infinitely above the persuasions that may influence kings to unjust deeds:[c] and is strictly impartial.

*True justice.*—

All are not just because they do no wrong;
But he, who will not wrong me when he may,
He is the truly just. I praise not those
Who in their petty dealings pilfer not,
But him whose conscience spurns at secret fraud,
When he might plunder and defy surprise.
His be the praise who, looking down with scorn
On the false judgment of the partial herd,
Consults his own clear heart, and boldly dares
To be, not to be thought, an honest man.[d]

*Justice impartial.*—A striking instance of the stern and impartial administration of justice is afforded in the history of one of the kings of Acalhuacan, a province which composed a part of the Mexican Empire. There was a law which forbade, on pain of death, the speaking of indecent words in the royal palace. One of the sons of this king, for whom he had felt a more particular attachment than for any of the rest, on account of his disposition and his virtues, violated this law. The words made use of by the young prince were rather the effect of youthful indiscretion than of any bad intention. The king was informed of it, and understanding that the word had been spoken by the prince in the presence of his tutors he sent to examine them. They, being afraid of experiencing some punishment if they concealed the truth, confessed it openly, but at the same time endeavoured to exculpate the prince by saying that he did not know the person to whom he spoke, nor that the language was improper. Notwithstanding all this, he ordered the young prince to be arrested immediately, and the very same day pronounced sentence of death upon him. The whole court were astonished at the rigour of the king, and interfered with their prayers and tears in behalf of the prince; but no remonstrances could move the inflexible mind of the king. "My son," said he, "has violated the law. If I pardon him, it will be said the laws are not binding on every one. I will let my subjects know that no one will be pardoned a transgression, as I do not even pardon the son whom I dearly love." The punishment was accordingly executed. The king shut himself up for forty days in a hall, without letting himself be seen by any one. He vented his grief in secret; and to conceal from his sight everything that might recall his sorrow, he caused the door of his son's apartment to be closed up by a wall. He showed his subjects that, although he was incapable of repressing the feelings of a father and sealing up the fountains of his grief, yet he would never permit them to overcome his zeal for the laws, and the most rigid impartiality in their execution.[e]

**20—23.** (20) **shall they die,** God has full control over them. Their lives are altogether in His hands. Sudden and overwhelming judgments He can bring. This may apply to the princes

people, the poor of *v.* 19. **at midnight,**[a] the time of security and helplessness. **without hand,** *i.e.* man's hand[b] or interference. The life of both poor and rich is in God's absolute control. (21) **eyes,** *etc.*, God's omniscience equals His omnipotence.[c] (22) **shadow of death,** poetic fig. for exceeding thick darkness[d] (23) **not lay,** *etc.*, better, He setteth not His thought long upon man.[e]

*No concealment for the wicked.*—I. The character here described. II. A special circumstance in their character: they wish to hide themselves. Why is this? A consciousness of wrong, and of the presence of God. III. The defeat of their desire. There are innumerable vigilant eyes in the world. Men are watching one another. The eyes of God are on all. IV. Hiding-places of the wicked. The darkness of profound dissimulation; of deep solitude; night. Men may change the light of religion into darkness and shroud themselves in it. In the other world there will be no hiding-place of darkness. Better that men should seek to hide themselves in the mercy of God.[f]

*Trouble at midnight* (*v.* 20).—The providence of God has been often remarkably displayed in the discovery of murder. A respectable publication at Basle relates the following instance:—"A person who wrought in a brewery quarrelled with one of his fellow-workmen, and struck him in such a manner that he died upon the spot. No other person was witness to the deed. He then took the body and threw it into a large fire under a boiling vat, where it was in a short time so completely consumed that no traces of its existence remained. On the following day, when the man was missed, the murderer observed very coolly that he had perceived his fellow-servant to have been intoxicated, and that he had probably fallen from a bridge, which he had to cross on his way home, and been drowned. For the space of seven years after no one entertained any suspicions of the real state of the fact. At the end of this period the man was again employed in the same brewery. He was then induced to reflect on the singularity of the circumstance that his crime had remained so long concealed. Having retired one evening to rest, one of the other workmen who slept with him, hearing him say in his sleep, 'It is now full seven years ago,' asked him, 'What was it you did seven years ago?' 'I put him,' he replied, still speaking in his sleep, 'under the boiling vat.' As the affair was not entirely forgotten, it immediately occurred to the man that his bed-fellow must allude to the person who was missing about that time; and he accordingly gave information of what he had heard to a magistrate. The murderer was apprehended, and though at first he denied that he knew anything of the matter, a confession of his crime was at length obtained from him, for which he suffered condign punishment."[g]

**24—26.** (24) **without number,**[a] *i.e.* without need of particularly searching them out: without such processes as belong to human judgments. **set others,** as Ps. lxxv. 7. (25) **destroyed,** or crushed. God makes short work with them. (26) **open sight,** *lit.* in the place of beholders: their punishment is publicly seen.[b]

*Inflexibility of justice.*—When a prince of the royal blood of France disgraced himself by committing robbery and murder in

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*a* Ex. xii. 29, 30; 1 Sa. xxv. 37, 38; 1 Th. v. 2.

*b* Da. ii. 34, 44, 45.

*c* God has no need to watch or set watch, as Job had supposed, ch. vii. 12.

2 Chr. xvi. 9; Je. xxxii. 19.

*d* Je. xxiii. 24; Am. ix. 2, 3; He. iv. 13.

*e* "A single thought of God's is enough to summon the whole world to judgment. Job had craved for leave to enter into judgment with God. Elihu replies, that God, of His own accord, finds out men in a moment, without any effort, and summons them to judgment."—*Wordsworth.*

*f* v. 22. *J. Holland.* i. 39.

*J. Foster.*

"As the rainbow would never be seen were it not for the clouds and the rain, the beauties of holiness would never shine so brightly were it not for the trials which the Spirit of God employs to promote them."—*Dr. Tweedie.*

*g* *Whitecross.*

**God has no need to search after a human fashion**

*a* Heb. *cheker*, digging the earth to find out.

*b* 2 Sa. xii. 12; 1 Ti. v. 20.

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Contempt is a noble and an innocent revenge; and silence the fullest expression of it. Except only storms and tempests, the greatest things of the world are seldom loud. Tumult and noise usually rise from the conflict of contrary things in a narrow passage; and just so does the loudness of wrath and reviling argue a contracted breast; such an one as has not room enough to wield and manage its own actions with stillness and composure.

*c Dr. Cheever.*

*d Shakespeare.*

"Who painted Justice blind, did not declare what magistrates should be, but what they are: not so much 'cause they rich and poor should weigh in their just scales alike; but because they, now blind with bribes, are grown so weak of sight, they'll sooner feel a cause, than see it right."—*Heath.*

*e Dr. Guthrie.*

the disobedience of men

*a* Ps. cxxv. 5.

*b* Ex ii. 23, 25, xx i. 23; Ps. xii. 5; Ja. v. 4.

"He is miserable once who feels it but twice who fears it before it comes."—*Oriental Prov.*

the streets of Paris, Louis XV. would not grant a pardon, though eagerly solicited to do so by a deputation from the Parliament of Paris, who tried him, and suspended their sentence until the royal pleasure should be known. "My lords and counsellors," said the king, "return to your chambers of justice, and promulgate your decree." "Consider," said the first president, "that the unhappy prince has your majesty's blood in his veins." "Yes," said the king, "but the blood has become impure, and justice demands that it should be let out; nor would I spare my own son for a crime for which I should be bound to condemn the meanest of my subjects." The prince was executed on the scaffold in the court of the grand Chatelet, on the 12th of August, 1729.[c]

*Justice.*—

If the deed were ill,
Be you contented, wearing now the garland,
To have a son set your decrees at nought;
To pluck down justice from your awful bench;
To trip the course of law, and blunt the sword
That guards the peace and safety of your person:
Nay, more, to spurn at your most royal image,
And mock your workings in a second body.
Question your royal thoughts, make the case yours;
Be now the father, and propose a son:
Hear your own dignity so much profaned,
See your most dreadful laws so loosely slighted,
Behold yourself so by a son disdain'd;
And then imagine me taking your part,
And, in your power, soft silencing your son.[d]

*Justice and mercy.*—Like two streams which unite their separate waters to form a common river, justice and mercy are combined in the work of redemption. Like the two cherubim whose wings met above the ark: like the two devout and holy men who drew the nails from Christ's body, and bore it to the grave; like the two angels who received it in charge, and, seated like mourners within the sepulchre (the one at the head, the other at the feet), kept silent watch over the precious treasure, —justice and mercy are associated in the work of Christ. They are the supporters of the shield on which the cross is emblazoned; they sustain the arms of our heavenly Advocate; they form the two solid and eternal pillars of the Mediator's throne. On Calvary, mercy and truth meet together, righteousness and peace embrace each other.[e]

**27, 28.** (27) **turned back,** fallen away from Him.[a] Following God is obedience to His commands, and consecration to His service. **his ways,** either of providence or precept. (28) **cause,** *etc.*, by their oppressions and neglect.[b]

*The profit of affliction.*—The bee is observed to suck honey from the thyme, a most hard and dry herb; so the good and faithful-minded man sucketh knowledge and obedience from the bitter potion of adversity and the cross, and turneth all to the best. The scouring and rubbing which fret others make him shine the brighter; the weight which crusheth others makes him, like the palm tree, grow the better: the hammer which knocks others all in pieces makes him the broader and the larger. *In incude et malco dilatantur,* they are made broader on the anvil, and with

the hammer; although it be with the hammer, yet, *dilatantur*, they are made to grow the wider.[c]

B.C. *cir.* 1520.

[c] *Spencer.*

**29, 30.** (29) **quietness**, to the poor, or maketh peace. **hideth his face**, as in anger. **whether . . only**, affirming God's ways to be regulated by principles of impartiality and righteousness which apply equally to one, or to many. (30) **hypocrite**, or profligate. **reign not**, more generally, prosper not. **be ensnared**,[a] deceived by seeing the wicked prospering.

*Salem.*—The heart of man pants after peace. I. It is the prerogative of God to give quietness. Man makes war. God concludes peace. 1. It is so in the nation: 2. It is so in the heart; 3. It shall be so the world over. II. The particular quiet that He gives to the soul. 1. Describe it negatively: it is not solitariness, nor insensibility, nor constrained silence, nor inactivity, nor temporary, nor unsatisfactory; 2. Describe it positively: it is the quiet of sweet satisfaction, of full assurance, of conscious safety, of confiding love, of hallowed devotion, of meek dependence. III. The impossibility of its being destroyed. Is there an arm stronger, a will more potent, attraction greater than His? Learn:—(1) Beware of false peace; (2) Fear not thou shalt lose true peace; (3) Peace is to be had for the asking.

*The secret of success* (*v.* 29).—A young sailor boy was remarked for his serenity and presence of mind in his first battle. "How was it, my boy," the mate asked, "that you were ready for everything, and yet as quiet as if by your mother's fireside?" "Because," said he, "I was alone with my God for an hour before the fight began."[b]—*The key to success.*—There was, according to fable, a woodman in a forest cutting down trees, when he heard a band of robbers approaching, and saw a long train of horses come winding over the hills where he was. He quickly climbed into one of the trees, where he could watch their motions without being seen. They rode up on their horses till they came to a great rock, where, dismounting, the captain of the band walked up to the rock, and said, "Open, Sesame!" The very moment this word was spoken a great door flew open, and they all went in and stowed away their plunder in the cave. The woodman watched in great surprise while all this was going on. He remembered the wonderful word "Sesame," which opened the door. So he remained quiet until the robbers were gone. As soon as they were out of sight he came down from the tree and went up to the rock, and cried out, "Open, Sesame!" Instantly the door flew open, and he went in. Then he gazed in wonder on all the precious things which were gathered together. He filled his panniers, or donkey-baskets, with gold and silver, as much as the animals could carry, and went home a rich man. He was made rich by the power of the word "Sesame." Our key to wealth is labour and perseverance.

when God gives peace who can hinder?

[a] "That godless people reign not, that they be not nets to the people." — *Delitzsch.*

[b] *Dr. T. Horton*, 83; *F. F. Clarke*, 63; *F. W. Foxle*, I. 241.

It is the old route of labour along which are many landmarks and many wrecks. It is lesson after lesson with the scholar, blow after blow with the labourer, crop after crop with the farmer, picture after picture with the painter, step after step, and mile after mile, with the traveller, that secures what all desire, success. Alexander desired his preceptor to prepare for him some easier and shorter way to learn geometry; but he was told that he must be content to travel the same road as others.

*b Ogendon.*

"When the tale of bricks is doubled, Moses comes."—*Hebrew Prov.*

**31—33.** (31) **meet**, *etc.*, here Elihu indicates the spirit before God which he thinks Job should cherish. The ungodly man ought to say, "I have borne," etc. **have borne**, so as to be humbled and learn by it.[a] **not offend**, this is the promise of amendment. (32) **teach**, the expression of a humble and submissive spirit, such as should follow sanctified chastisements.[b] (33) **according . . mind?** shall God proceed

speaking to God in the time of affliction

[a] *Delitzsch* takes this clause to mean, "I have been proud."

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*Wordsworth* prefers to put these sentences as a series of questions. "Hath the ungodly said to God," etc.

Le. xxvi. 40—42; Je. xxxi. 18, 19; Da. ix. 7—14.

*b* Ps. xix. 12, xxxii. 8; Eph. iv. 25, 28; 1 Pe. iv. 3.

*c* If you think to order God, tell what your principles are.

*vv.* 31, 32. *W. Fenner*, i. 417; *Abp. Tillotson*, ix. 191; *E. Broadhurst*, 109; *D. Black*, 392.

*v.* 32. *J. Slade*, vii. 327; *A. B. Evans*, 175.

*v.* 33. *A. Roberts*, v. 153.

*d Abp. Leighton.*

*e W. Jay.*

"Men are born to trouble at first and exercised in it all their days. There is a cry at the beginning of life, and a groan at its close."—*Arnot.*

**words without wisdom**

*a* Some, however, connect this word with *abah*, to desire, and render it as in the Authorised Version.

*b* "Since Job will not give way, Elihu fee's that he has no alternative but to wish that the trial may go on until it has done its work." — *Spk. Com.*

to judgment with you (Job) just as you may wish? **refuse**, to admit His ways of judgment, or accept them. **speak**, *etc.*,[c] your conclusion.

*Speaking to God in the time of affliction* —It need not be vocal. This communing of the heart with God is a rare thing. If conversation refreshes the heart in sorrow, this most of all. A great recommendation of affliction is that it is a time of sober thoughts. So speaking to God is an acknowledgment that the chastisement is from His hand. Would that such a heart were in us; there would then be a desire to know and do what is not now seen of duty, etc.[d]—*The future resigned to God.*—I. Some errors reproved. 1. A desire to choose for ourselves; 2. A disposition to murmur at our earthly lot; 3. Envy at the circumstances of others; 4. Confidence in our own judgment. II. Doctrines to be established. 1. The absolute sovereignty of God; 2. The universal extent of His holy providence. III. Consolations supplied. 1. Faithfulness of Divine promises; 2. Comfort of submission to His will; 3. Certainty of final perfection of all believers in Divine presence.—*The condemnation of self-will.*—The meaning of the question is obvious. Shall the Supreme Being do nothing without thy consent? Should He ask counsel of thee? Ought He to regulate His dispensations according to thy views and desires? Should it be according to thy mind? Were your preacher to address this question individually to this assembly you would all answer, "No." To bring you to this temper, we shall enlarge on the desire of having things "according to our mind." I. As unreasonable. II. As common. III. As criminal. IV. As dangerous. V. As impracticable.[e]

*Payson's happiness.*—"Christians might avoid much trouble and inconvenience," says Dr. Payson, "if they would only believe what they profess—that God is able to make them happy without anything else. They imagine, if such a dear friend were to die, or such and such blessings to be removed, they should be miserable; whereas God can make them a thousand times happier without them. To mention my own case—God has been depriving me of one blessing after another; but as every one was removed He has come in and filled up its place; and now, when I am a cripple, and not able to move, I am happier than ever I was in my life before, or ever expected to be; and if I had believed this twenty years ago, I might have been spared much anxiety."

**34—37.** (34) **understanding**, or of heart. (35) **hath spoken**, in his intense and agonised utterances. All wise men will admit extravagance in Job's expressions, and that they could easily be turned to evil meanings. Job's heart was better than his words. (36) **my desire**, lit. *abi*,[a] my father. It is either an address to God, a mere exclamation, or a reverent appellation for Job. **for wicked men**, like them, such as *they* might give.[b] (37) **rebellion**, a stubborn spirit that will not be humbled. **clappeth**, better, he will clap, as expression of scorn and triumph, if he is not tried until he is humbled.

*Evil speaking.*—It is not good to speak evil of all whom we know bad; it is worse to judge evil of any who may prove good. To speak ill upon knowledge shows a want of charity; to speak ill upon suspicion shows a want of honesty. I will not speak so bad as I know of many; I will not speak worse than I know of any. To know evil by others, and not speak it, is sometimes

discretion; to speak evil by others, and not know it, is always dishonesty. He may be evil himself who speaks good of others upon knowledge, but he can never be good himself who speaks ill of others upon suspicion.[c]

*The slanderer.*—

Slander, the foulest whelp of Sin. The man
In whom this spirit entered was undone;
His tongue was set on fire of hell; his heart
Was black as death; his legs were faint with haste
To propagate the lie his soul had framed;
His pillow was the peace of families
Destroyed, the sigh of innocence reproached,
Broken friendships, and the strife of brotherhoods,
Yet did he spare his sleep, and hear the clock
Number the midnight watches, on his bed
Devising mischief more; and early rose,
And made most hellish meals of good men's names.
From door to door you might have seen him speed,
Or placed amidst a group of gaping fools,
And whispering in their ears with his foul lips.
Peace fled the neighbourhood in which he made
His haunts: and, like a moral pestilence,
Before his breath the healthy shoots and blooms
Of social joy and happiness decayed.
Fools only in his company were seen,
And those forsaken of God, and to themselves
Given up. The prudent shunned him and his house
As one who had a deadly moral plague.[d]

B.C. *circ.* 1520.

[c] *Warwick.*

"The world with calumny abounds, the whitest virtue slander wounds; there are whose joy is, night and day, to talk a character away: eager from rout to rout they haste, to blast the generous and the chaste, and hunting reputation down, proclaim their triumphs through the town." — *Pope.*

"The worthiest people are the most injured by slander, as we usually find that to be the best fruit which the birds have been pecking at." — *Swift.*

[d] *Pollock.*

## *CHAPTER THE THIRTY-FIFTH.*

**1—4.** (1) **moreover**, after another brief pause he proceeds to show that man's righteousness constitutes no claim upon God (2) **this**, a supposed statement of Job's: Elihu repeats it not exactly as it was,[a] but as he apprehended it. **more than God's**, or as LXX., "I am just before God." From the statement that his righteousness exceeded God's we may well suppose Job would have shrunk. (3) **advantage**, present temporal good. **profit . . sin**, read as marg. "What do I gain by it more than I should gain by sin?"[b] (4) **answer**, *lit.* return to thee words. **companions**, such as may take the same imperfect views.[c]

*Man's character.*—I. Selfishness is an evil in man's character. 1. Some take up even religion for mere worldly gain; 2. Some for eternal gain. II. God is independent of man's character. Divine sovereignty is—1. The reason of all law; 2. The source of redemption; 3. The ground of rewards. III. Society is influenced by man's character. It may hurt, or it may profit. Three things give to every man some influence. 1. Relationship; 2. Dependence; 3. Affection.[d]

*Formation of character.*—If you ever watched an icicle as it formed, you would have noticed how it froze one drop at a time, until it was a foot long or more. If the water was clean the icicle remained clean, and sparkled brightly in the sun: but if the water was slightly muddy, the icicle looked foul, and its beauty was spoiled. Just so our characters are formed. One little

**the charge of self-righteousness reiterated**

[a] Comp. Job ix. 30—35 x 13—15.

[b] "The idea is, that as to good treatment, or securing the favour of God under the arrangements of His government, a man might just as well be wicked as righteous. He would be as likely to be prospered in the world, and to experience the tokens of the Divine favour." — *Barnes.*

[c] Poss. the ref. may be to the three friends, whose arguments Elihu had

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undertaken to refute at the time he replied to Job, ch. xxxii. 5—17.

*vv.* 1, 2. *W. Romaine*, vi. 360.

*d Dr. Thomas.*

**the clouds as reminders of greatness, etc., of God**

*a* "The drift of this is that there is no such relation between God and man as to make happiness a reward due to righteousness. When granted, it is a matter of favour and grace; when withdrawn, complaints imply a wrong conception of our position before God."—*Spk. Com.* 1 Ch. xxix. 14; Ps. xvi. 2, 3; Pr. viii. 36, ix. 12; Je. vii. 19; Ro. xi. 35.

*vv* 6, 7. *Dr. D. Whitby*, 236.

*b W. M. Punshon.*

**God gives songs in the night**

*a* Elihu does but touch one side of the truth: the sin of man does affect God by becoming a matter of compassionate interest to Him.

*b* Job xxiv. 12.

*c* Ps. xliii. 2, lvi. 1, 2.

*d* Ps. xlii. 8, cxlix. 5; Ac. xvi. 25.

*e* Ps. civ. 27, viii 5, 6.

*e.* 10. *S. Bourn*, i. 29; *Dr. T. Mutter*, 67; *H. Melville*, 22; *J. Hambleton*, 472.

*f C. Spurgeon.*

*g R. Cecil, M.A.*

thought or feeling at a time adds its influence. If every thought be pure and right the soul will be bright and lovely, and will sparkle with happiness; but if there be many thoughts and feelings impure and wrong the mind will be soiled, the character depraved and darkened, and there will be final deformity and wretchedness. How important, then, that we should be more on our guard against every evil, etc.

**5—7.** (5) **heavens**, wh. impress on us the infinite superiority and independence of God. "He is too exalted in nature to be susceptible of benefit or hurt from the righteousness or sin of man respectively." **higher than thou,** spoken in irony. (6) **against him,** thy sin hurts thyself, it cannot reach to Him.[a] (7) **what givest thou?** so as to have any kind of claim upon Him.

*Two characters.*—We place two characters before you. Here is one:—He is decided in his devotedness to God, painstaking in his search for truth, strong in benevolent purpose and holy endeavour, wielding a blessed influence, failing oft and ceasing never, ripening with the lapse of years, the spirit mounting upon the breath of its parting prayer, the last enemy destroyed, his memory green for ages, and grateful thousands chiselling upon his tomb, "He, being dead, yet speaketh." There is another:—He resists religious impression, outgrows the necessity for prayer, forgets the lessons of his youth, and the admonitions of his godly home, forsakes the sanctuary, sits in the seat of the scorner, laughs at religion as a foolish dream, influences many for evil, runs to excess of wickedness, sends in some instances his victims down before him, is stricken with premature old age, has hopeless prospects and a terrible death-bed, rots from the remembrance of his fellows, and angel hands burn in upon his gloomy sepulchre the epitaph of his blasted life, "And that man perished not alone in his iniquity."[b]

**8—11.** (8) **hurt a man,** a fellow-man, who belongs to your sphere; it cannot affect God, who is so infinitely exalted above thee.[a] Elihu is right in showing that there cannot be such merely personal feelings of offence and pleasure in God as we find in men. So Job's desire to contend the matter would only be fitting if some fellow-man had done him injustice. To God he should *submit*. (9) **oppressions,** introducing the case Job had stated,[b] in order to present his explanation of it. **mighty,** the violence of tyrants and ungodly rich people. (10) **none saith,**[c] *i.e.* they cry, but do not cry to God; or if they do, not in a right spirit. **songs . . night,**[d] fig. for comfort in time of distress. (11) **more,** *i.e.* better. **beasts,** who cry only through animal instinct.[e]

*Songs in the night* (*homiletic hints*).—Any man can sing songs in the day. Easy to sing when we can read the notes by daylight. No man can make a song in the night of himself. How shall I chant God's praises unless He give me the song? Since, then, He gives songs in the night, let us wait upon Him for the music.[f]—*Songs in the night.*—I. He who made man can alone truly comfort him, and give him songs in the night. II. God frequently brings man into the night of affliction in order to demonstrate His power to lift him above it, and give him an opportunity to acknowledge Him.[g]

*The wind-swept harp.*—It is related that in Germany there stood two vast towers, far apart, on the extremes of a castle; and that

the old baron to whom this castle belonged stretched huge wires across from one to the other, thus constructing an Æolian harp. Ordinary winds produced no effect upon the mighty instrument; but when fierce storms and wild tempests came rushing down the sides of the mountains and through the valleys, and hurled themselves against those wires, then they began to roll out the most majestic strains of music that can be conceived. It is thus with many of the deepest and grandest emotions of the human soul. The soft and balmy zephyrs that fan the brows of ease, and cheer the hours of prosperity and repose, give no token of the inward strength and blessing which the tempest's wrath discloses. But when storms and hurricanes assault the soul, the bursting wail of anguish rises with the swells of jubilant grandeur, and sweeps upward to the throne of God as a song of triumph, victory, and praise.

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'Fire and hammer and file are necessary to give the metal form; and it must have many a grind, and many a rub, ere it will shine so. In trial, character is shaped and beautified and brightened." —*S. Coley.*

**12—14.** (12) **there they cry,** or *thus*, *i.e.* while in this state of mind, without piety or faith. **because,** *etc.*, lit. "from the face of the pride of wicked men:"[a] the "oppressors" and "mighty" of *v.* 9. (13) **vanity,** vain, hollow, heartless petitions.[b] Elihu more than hints that this was the character of Job's prayers. (14) **thou sayest,** *e.g.* ch. xxiii. 8, 9. **judgment,** strict impartial dealing. **therefore trust,**[c] that word is meant to sum up the spirit towards God wh. Job should cherish: trust, including submission, humility, and patience.

**Job exhorted to trust in God**

*A check to despondency.*—

There's not a star the heaven can show,
There's not a cottage hearth below,
But feeds with solace kind the willing soul:
Men love us, or they need our love;
Freely they own, or heedless prove
The curse of lawless hearts, the joy of self-control.
Then rouse thee from desponding sleep,
Nor by the wayside lingering weep,
Nor fear to seek Him farther in the wild,
Whose love can turn earth's worst and least
Into a conqueror's royal feast;
Thou wilt not be untrue, thou shalt not be beguil'd.[d]

*Cause of despondency.*—A patient investigation, and sometimes a not very tedious one, will ascertain the source of these feelings—some morbid state of the stomach, liver, kidneys, or other part, not perceptible to the patient, yet sufficiently discoverable by disturbed functions. As the brain itself, or the heart, may be the part affected, and as it is generally known that this might be the cause of depression, it is too common for low-spirited persons to imagine that they have diseased brain or heart. "A sound mind in a sound body" is the chief condition for constituting happiness; but the sound mind is by far the more consequence; for we see persons enduring years of pain without the nervous system giving way, and consequently with a cheerfulness that seems to bid defiance to suffering. This, however, happens most commonly in diseases of the external parts; whilst the painless or almost imperceptible affections of the internal organs, communicating with the brain by the eighth pair of nerves, are those which give rise to the symptoms recorded by that truthful observer, Cullen:—"languor, sadness, and fear, without adequate cause."[e]

An exemplary young man, a member of the Baptist Church in Newark, N.J., suddenly lost his enjoyment, imagined himself doomed, or, even worse, that he was himself the devil. No encouragement of the Gospel would he receive. He went to the railroad, threw himself before an approaching locomotive, and was crushed

[a] "The sense is, None giveth answer to deliver them from their oppressors. And why? Because they do not ask in faith." —*Wordsworth.*

[b] Pr. xv. 8; Jas. iv. 3.

[c] Compare Job's own words, ch. xiii. 15.

[d] *v.* 14. *Bp. Dehon*, ii. 399.

[e] *J. Keble.*

B.C. *cir.* 1520.

**words without knowledge**

*a* "The connection of thought may be, 'And now, bec. God hath not visited Job in wrath as he deserved, and hath not taken full account of his insolence, his spirit is unbroken, and he continues to speak rebellious ly against God." —*Spk. Com.*

*b* Heb. *pash*, not elsewhere used in Heb. LXX. render offence; Vulg. *scelus*, i.e. *transgression.*

"Let your trouble tarry till its own day comes. The darkest hour is that before the dawn. When things come to the worst, they'll mend."—*English Proverb.*

*c Mason.*

**15, 16.** (15) **but now,** *etc.*,[a] this very difficult verse requires retranslation. "Because it is not so that His anger has visited Job for his irreverent speeches." **he . . extremity,** "He (God) hath not taken severe cognisance of his transgression." Extremity, *Delitzsch* trans. *sullenness.*[b] (16) **in vain,** or for uttering vain things. **without knowledge,** spoken foolishly.

*Suitable words.*—The following anecdote is told of Richard Weaver. In a railroad carriage a navvy was swearing terribly. The guard, knowing Richard's habit of speaking to every one, whispered to him, "Better let him alone; he is so violent that he would strike you if his passions were raised." Richard got close to him, and said, "Give me your hand, my friend." He then whispered into his ear, "Why are you calling on my father?" "I know nothing of your father," answered the swearer. "I ll tell you his name and character," said Richard; and then he repeated the text, "God so loved the world," etc., and enlarged upon it. As if struck by some sudden conviction, the man answered, "These were the last words my mother said to me." "Then let us pray," said Richard, "that God may make them the means of your salvation." They did so; and Richard met him not long after a changed man.

*Despondency.*—

That some weighty grief
O'erhangs thy soul, thy ev'ry look proclaims;
Why then refuse it words? The heart that bleeds
From any stroke of fate or human wrongs,
Loves to disclose itself, that list'ning pity
May drop a healing tear upon the wound.
'Tis only when with inbred horror smote,
At some base act, or done, or to be done,
That the reviling soul, with conscious dread,
Shrinks back into itself.[c]

## *CHAPTER THE THIRTY-SIXTH.*

**Elihu professes to urge not ordinary reasons**

*a* "The Hebrew commentators remark that the word 'added,' or 'proceeded,' is used bec. this speech is *added* to the number which it might be supposed he would make There had been three series of speeches by Job and his friends, and in each one of them Job had spoken three times."—*Barnes*

Word *suffer* in Heb. means *to surround*, in a

**1—4.** (1, 2) **suffer,** bear with me in prolonging my speech.[a] **yet to speak,** *as marg.* yet words, considerations to urge, for God. (3) **from afar,** *i.e.* I will not utter mere commonplaces, only results of wide and mature thinking. From the wide realms of history and nature. **will ascribe,** *etc.*, setting his first principle, to regard God as righteous whatever happened, against Job's complaints. (4) **perfect in knowledge,**[b] Elihu so describes himself, regarding himself as specially inspired by God.

*The preacher.*—The words may be used to represent some of the words of the true preacher. I. They represent the side he has to take. 1. He has to defend the procedure of God; 2. He has to vindicate the character of God; 3. He has to enforce the claim of God; 4. He has to offer the redemption of God. II. They represent the knowledge he has to communicate. He has to fetch his knowledge from afar. 1. From afar in relation to the intuitions of men; 2. From afar in relation to the philosophical deductions of men; 3. From afar in relation to the natural spirit of men. III. They represent the purpose he has to maintain. Ascribe righteousness to God. He will show—1. That no suffering falls on any creature more than he deserves; 2. That no work is demanded of any creature more than he can render.[c]

*Knowledge from afar* (*v.* 3).—There is something in our nature which places superior importance on anything which comes from afar. When a man has to contend with a person who is very learned, should a friend express a doubt as to the result, or advise him to take great care, he will say, "Fear not. *reggutomratila*, from very far I will fetch my arguments." "The arguments which are afar off shall now be brought near." "Well, sir, since you press me, I will fetch my knowledge from afar."[d]—*Pursuit of knowledge.*—Let us arise by sanctified meditation to the survey of the immense field spread out before us Let us view science in all its aspects. Let us also stand on a holy mountain whence we may see the land which the Lord has given us to conquer and possess. Let us keep near to the river, and then, if necessary, let us pursue its whole extent. Let us glance up to its source and follow its current afar off. Let us distinguish its forms, its secondary streams, its principal branches from the accessory branches. Let us examine the marsh in which its pure water is corrupted, because the impulse of the former stream is wanting. Let us contemplate it when its fructifying waters are flowing along shores enriched by its gifts, and when its foaming waves rush on with impetuosity. Let us consider the tributary streams that bring foreign waters to it, and the various soils over which it rolls, that we may be well acquainted with the elements it derives from them. It is by all these branches of knowledge that science is formed. We must weigh all the influences, discern all the combinations that we may derive from the Christian system, and construct sacred theology, which is man's noblest science, since it is the science of God.[e]

**5—7.** (5) **despiseth not,** doth not act scornfully. Therefore He cannot have scorned Job, as he too easily assumed.[a] **strength .. wisdom,** *Heb.* strength of heart; in Heb. heart is often used to denote the intellectual powers. It is suggestive that God's wisdom is heart-wisdom; it comes from the seat of *love* as well as knowledge. (6) **poor,** afflicted, humble, the poor in spirit.[b] (7) **with kings,**[c] *i.e.* when the righteous are in positions of dignity and prosperity God is their protector and friend. **and they are,** better, that they may be.

*The eye of God on the righteous* (*v.* 7).—Many good things do others receive from the hand of God; but with these good things the saints have also His good-will, which good-will sweetens all their comforts, and sanctifies all their afflictions, turns their afflictions into blessings, and makes their blessings blessings indeed! "He withdraweth not His eyes from the righteous." Common comforts come to the saints as a fruit of covenant-love, and God's severest chastisements are the effects of His paternal affection. Those things that are not good in themselves work for their good; and dispensations, grievous at the time, are salutary in their issue, for they produce the "peaceable fruits of righteousness."[d]

**8—10.** (8) **fetters,** fig. for cast into prison.[a] **holden in cords,** for purposes of discipline. (9) **then,** while in the affliction. **work,** the true character of their actions. **have exceeded,** *become overweening*, great in their own conceit:[b] encouraging inward evils of presumption and self-sufficiency. (10) **discipline,** correction, teaching that reveals inner secret

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hostile sense. In Syriac and Chaldee, it means *to wait*, probably from the idea of going round and round.

*b* Co. ii. 17; 2 Pe. i. 16.

*c Dr. Thomas.*

*d Roberts.*

"Only add deeds to thy knowledge answerable; add faith, add virtue, patience, temperance; add love, by name to come call'ed charity, the soul of all the rest. Then wilt thou not be loth to leave this paradise, but shalt possess a paradise within thee, happier far."—*Milton.*

*e Dr. D'Aubigne.*

**the mighty God regards even the poor**

*a* Job x. 3—7, 13—16.

*b* Mat. v. 3.

*c* Comp. Eph. ii. 6; Re. iii. 21.

If you hear the loud thunders of God's wrath rolling over you in the terrors of the law, be sure you listen to the still small voice of the Gospel.

*d B. Beddoe.*

**and teaches those who are in affliction**

*a* "The words wh. describe afflictions wh. befall the righteous

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are purposely chosen to indicate their direct object, viz., to arrest and chastise them when they are going wrong." —*Spk. Com.*

*b* Elihu here shows insight. He points out that afflictions bear gracious relations, as discipline, to the subtle moral infirmities of the righteous. They need not be visitations for outward transgressions.

*c French.*

**the happy fruit of obedience**

*a* Job iv. 20, 21; Ho. iv. 6. Impenitence changes affliction, wh. is intended to be a means of rescue, into total destruction; yet there are some who will not be warned and affrighted by it.

"Lawns which we would keep in the best condition are very frequently mown; the grass has scarcely any respite from the scythe. Out in the meadows there is no such repeated cutting, they are mown but once or twice in the year. Even thus the nearer we are to God, and the more regard He has for us, the more frequent will be our adversities. To be very dear to God, involves no small degree of chastisement." —*C. H Spurgeon.*

*b Daniel Rowlands.*

**the fate of**

evils. **commandeth,** affliction being the voice that calls to repentance and change.

*Scripture interpreted by affliction.*—What an interpreter of Scripture is affliction! How many stars in its heaven shine out brightly in the night of sorrow and pain which were unperceived or overlooked in the garish day of prosperity! What an enlarger of Scripture is any other outer or minor event which stirs the depths of our hearts, which touches us near to the core and centre of our lives. Trouble of spirit, condemnation of conscience, sudden danger, strong temptation, when any of these overtake us what evils do they take away, that we may see what hitherto we saw not! What new domains of God's Word do they bring within our spiritual ken! How do promises, which once fell flat upon our ears, become precious now; psalms become our order, which before were aloof from us! How do we see things now with the eye, which before we knew only by the hearing of the ear; which before men had told us, but now we ourselves have found, so that on these accounts also the Scripture is fitted to be our companion, and to do us good all the years of our life.[c]

**11, 12.** (11) **obey,** the voice of the rod of chastisement. **serve him,** with a new spirit of consecration. **in prosperity,** lit. *in good.* **pleasures,** delights; the word is used for the deepest and highest happiness. (12) **perish,** pass away. **sword,** or bow. Sudden Div. judgments. **without knowledge,**[a] or on account of their foolishness. "Because they knew not the day of their visitation." "In all their suffering they never saw *the design.*"

*Affliction is profitable.*—Affliction is very useful and profitable to the godly. The prodigal son had no thought of returning to his father's house till he had been humbled by adversity. Hagar was haughty under Abraham's roof, and despised her mistress; but in the wilderness she was meek and lowly. Jonah sleeps on board ship, but in that whale's belly he watches and prays. Manasseh lived as a libertine at Jerusalem, and committed the most enormous crimes; but when he was bound in chains in the prison at Babylon, his heart was turned to seek the Lord his God. Bodily pain and disease have been instrumental in rousing many to seek Christ, when those who were in high health have given themselves no concern about Him. The ground which is not rent and torn with the plough bears nothing but thistles and thorns. The vines will run wild, in process of time, if they be not pruned and trimmed. So would our wild hearts be overrun with filthy, poisonous weeds, if the true Vine-dresser did not often check their growth by crosses and sanctified troubles. "It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth." Our Saviour says, "Every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth, that it may bring forth more fruit." There can be no gold or silver finely wrought without first being purified with fire, and no elegant houses built with stones till the hammers have squared and smoothed them. So we can neither become vessels of honour in the house of our Father till we are melted in the furnace of affliction, nor lively stones in the walls of New Jerusalem till the hand of the Lord has beaten off our proud excrescences and tumours with His own hammers.[b]

**13, 14.** (13) **heap up wrath,** on the part of God towards them.[a] *Spk. Com.* suggests that it may refer to encouraging

rebellious feelings against God. "They lift up wrath in themselves against God" by pride and hardness of heart.[a] cry not, in prayer to Him.[c] bindeth, with cords, as *v.* 8. (14) in youth, prematurely.[d] Heb. *their soul dieth.* among the unclean,[e] as that of the unclean. Allusion is to the men of Sodom.

*Rejoicing in affliction.*—A colporteur in a Southern city thus sketches an interview with a humble Christian: "Here is Uncle Jack C——, an old, white-headed black man. 'Uncle Jack, how are you?' 'I is very painful in my knee; but, thank my heavenly Master, I'm cause to be thankful. My good Master jus' gib me 'nuf to make me humble.' 'And do you enjoy religion as much now, Uncle Jack, as when you could go to church and class-meetings?' 'Yes; I joys him more. Den I trust to de people, to de meetin', to de sarment; an' when I hear de hym sing, and de pray, I feels glad. But all dis ain't like de good Lord in de heart. God's love here' (striking his breast) makes all de hard heart go 'way, and make Jack sit down and wonder what de good Master gwine to do wid dis ole nigger.' 'Then you love God, if He does afflict you?' 'Oh, yes! God—Him do all dis for me good. God wise. Jack don't know. At night hear a noise. Me no know what him is; but when me get light, and me hear noise, den me see, me know, me got sense den. Here, in dis painful life, all dark; me no know: but dare, wid God, all is light—see all, know all. Glory, hallelujah!'"

**15—18.** (15) **in his affliction,** better, *by* his affliction.[a] **openeth their ears,** to receive admonition. **in oppression,** by suffering. (16) **even so,** if thou, Job, hadst but cherished a right spirit under the chastisement. **removed thee,** or urged thee on. **the strait,** or the jaws of a strait: jaws of distress.[b] **set on thy table,** *Heb.* the rest, or setting down on thy table: what is laid upon the table.[c] (17) **fulfilled the judgment,** experienced the punishment wh. comes on the wicked, bec. of the wrong spirit you cherish. **take hold,** join in punishing thee; marg. reads, "should uphold thee." (18) **wrath,**[d] in thy heart towards God. Some think it means wrath in God towards Job.

*Solemn warning.*—These words are applicable to all impenitent sinners. They contain—I. An important assertion. "Because there is wrath." 1. This assertion must be explained; 2. It must be confirmed. II. They contain an affectionate admonition "Beware." It enjoins—1. The exercise of caution; 2. The pursuit of salvation. The text urges—III. An impressive argument. 1. The sinner's punishment is inevitable; 2. It is irremediable.

*Affliction differently affects different people.*—How different are summer storms from winter ones! In winter they rush over the earth with their violence; and if any poor remnants of foliage or flowers have lingered behind, these are swept along at one gust. Nothing is left but desolation; and long after the rain has ceased, pools of water and mud bear tokens of what has been. But when the clouds have poured out their torrents in summer, when the winds have spent their fury, and the sun breaks forth again in glory, all things seem to rise with renewed loveliness from their refreshing bath. The flowers, glistening with rainbows, smell sweeter than before; the grass seems to

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the hypocrite in heart

*a* Comp. Ro. ii. 5; Ja. v. 3.

*b* So Heb. *draweth*, Delitzsch, *Scultens, etc.*

*c* Comp. Job xxxiii. 26.

*d* "By premature decrepitude brought on by sin."—*Wordsworth.*

*e* "Heb. *Kedeshim.* See De. xxiii. 17. The literal meaning is consecrated, *i.e.* devoted to the service of Astarte, an ancient form of the most hideous of all superstitions."—*Spk. Com.*

r. 14 *Dr Collyer, Scrip. Facts* 365.

God delivers the poor

*a* Job xxxiii. 15-28; Ps. cxix. 67, 71; He. xii. 11.

*b* Delitzsch.

*c* "The tables of the Orientals in ancient times were prob. like what they are now—easily movable: trays set on short feet, raising them a few inches from the ground."—*Rich*

"He is impelling thee forward to thy good, fr. a narrow passage into a large room, if thou receivest aright His fatherly chastisement."—*Wordsworth.*

Ps. xxiii. 5.

*d* "Let not anger entice thee to sinful ruling."—*Delitzsch*

"The truth is, when we are under any affliction, we are

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generally troubled with a malicious kind of melancholy; we only dwell and pore upon the sad and dark occurrences of Providence; but never take notice of the more benign and bright ones." — *Bp. Hopkins.*

• *C. H. Spurgeon.*

**God regards not the wealth and power of man**

*a Delitzsch* trans. this verse,—"Shall thy crying place thee beyond distress, and all the efforts of strength?"

*b* Job iii. 3—14, vi. 8, 9, vii. 1, x. 18, xiv. 13, xvi. 21, xxiii. 3, xxxi. 35.

*c* "Thou hast not acquiesced in afflictions, wh. are means of spiritual health, but hast perverted them into occasions of sin."—*Wordsworth.*

*d* He. xi. 25.

*e* 21. *R. Walker*, iv 235; *R. W. Dibdin*, 103.

• *Jeremy Taylor.*

**Divine teachings are plain to all**

*a Umbreit.*

*b* "Because He, as a sovereign, explains not all His dealings, Job has presumed to teach Him."—*Fausset.*

*c* See Job xxxiv. 13.

*d* "Concerning which men sing."—*Vulg.* Ps. xxxiv. 3.

• Ps. xix. 1—4.

have gained another brighter shade of green; and the young plants which had hardly come into sight, have taken their place among their fellows in the borders, so quickly have they sprung among the showers. The air, too, which may previously have been oppressive, is become clear, and soft, and fresh. Such, too, is the difference when the storms of affliction fall on hearts unrenewed by Christian faith, and on those who abide in Christ. In the former they bring out the dreariness and desolation which may before have been unapparent. The gloom is not relieved by the prospect of any cheering ray to follow it; of any flowers or fruits to show its beneficence. But in the true Christian soul, "though weeping may endure for a night, joy cometh in the morning." A sweet smile of hope and love follows every tear; and tribulation itself is turned into the chief of blessings."[e]

**19—21.** (19) **thy riches,** as a reason why you should not be cut off.[a] **forces of strength,** such as age, wisdom, reputation, authority, and rank. (20) **the night,** of death; to this Job had looked:[b] but Elihu says the future life can bring no joy to him save as he is right hearted. (21) **this,** *etc.*,[c] the iniquity of complaining against God. **rather than affliction,**[d] bearing affliction in a spirit of true resignation.

*Affliction succeeded by joy.*—When the Christian's last pit is digged, when he is descended into his grave, and finished his state of sorrows and suffering, then God opens the river of abundance, the rivers of life and never-ceasing felicities. As much as moments are exceeded by eternity, and the sighing of a man by the joys of an angel, and a salutary frown by the light of God's countenance, a few groans by the infinite and eternal hallelujahs; so much are the sorrows of the saints to be undervalued, in respect of what is deposited for them in the treasures of eternity. Their sorrows can die, but so cannot their joys. . . . Every chain is a ray of light, and every prison is a palace, and every loss is the purchase of a kingdom, and every affront in the cause of God is an eternal honour, and every day of sorrow is a thousand years of comfort, multiplied with a never-ceasing numeration: days without night, joys without sorrow, sanctity without sin, charity without stain, possession without fear, society without envying, communication of joys without lessening; and they shall dwell in a blessed country, where an enemy never entered, and from whence a friend never went away.[e]

**22—25.** (22) **exalteth,** doeth lofty things;[a] exalts Himself in the exhibition of His power. **who . . him?** no one is qualified to give so exalted conceptions of the government of God as He is Himself.[b] (23) **who,** *etc.*,[c] comp. Isa. xl. 12—14. (24) **magnifying his work,** by submission, by learning well the moral and spiritual lessons He would teach thereby. **behold,** prob. should be *sing*, or *laud*.[d] (25) **every man,** *etc.*,[e] Elihu refers to those works of God which he was about to describe.

*The power of God.*—We speak of the power of light, heat, water, wind, electricity, beauty, knowledge, holiness, law, life, death; but none of these isolated or even in combination as they operate throughout the universe, can give us an adequate idea of the power of Him from whom they came, and whose purposes they serve. We speak of the power of man in his science, mechanism, laws, armies, steamships, etc.; of the power of

angels in all the ways revealed in Scripture, but these powers united with the former fall infinitely short of the power of God. The concentrated power of the whole universe, weighed with His, would be lighter than vanity.*f*—*Reception of power.*—When a lecturer on electricity wants to show an example of a human body surcharged with fire he places a person on a stool with glass legs. The glass serves to isolate him from the earth, because it will not conduct fire, the electric fluid. Were it not for this, however much might be poured into his frame, it would be carried away by the earth; but, when thus isolated from it, he retains all that enters him. You see no fire, you hear no fire; but you are told that it is pouring into him. Presently you are challenged to the proof; asked to come near, and hold your hand close to his person: when you do so a spark of fire shoots out towards you. If thou, then, wouldst have thy soul surcharged with the fire of God, so that those who come nigh to thee shall feel some mysterious influence proceeding out from thee, thou must draw nigh to the source of that fire, to the throne of God and of the Lamb, and shut thyself out from the world—that cold world which so swiftly steals our fire away. Enter into thy closet, and shut to thy door, and there, isolated before the throne, await the baptism; then the fire shall fill thee: and, when thou comest forth, holy power will attend thee, and thou shalt labour, not in thine own strength, but with demonstration of the Spirit, and with power.*g*

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*f J. Bate*

"Immensity is a pre eminent mode of the essence of God, by which it is void of place according to space and limits; being co-extended space, because it belongs to simple entity, not having part and part, therefore not having part beyond part."—*Arminius.*

We don't know of the Divine mind in matter, bear in mind.

*g W. Arthur.*

**26—28.** (26) **know him not,** cannot fully, or even adequately, apprehend Him.*a* **number of his years,** Ps. xc. 2, cii. 27. (27) **maketh small,** *lit.* He draweth up to Him: attracts from the earth below. **according to the vapour,** or mist, which God has drawn up. Thick vapours dissolve in heavy rains. God tempers the rain.*b* (28) **abundantly,** *lit.* upon many men.

*The philosophy of rain.*—To understand the philosophy of this beautiful and often sublime phenomenon, so often witnessed since the creation of the world, and essential to the very existence of plants and animals, a few facts derived from observation and a long train of experiments must be remembered. I. Were the atmosphere everywhere, at all times, at a uniform temperature, we should never have rain, or hail, or snow: the water absorbed by it in evaporation from the sea and the earth's surface would descend in an imperceptible vapour, or cease to be absorbed by the air when it was once fully saturated. II. The absorbing power of the atmosphere, and consequently its capability to retain humidity, is proportionably greater in warm than in cold air. III. The air near the surface of the earth is warmer than it is in the region of the clouds. The higher we ascend from the earth, the colder do we find the atmosphere. Hence the perpetual snow on very high mountains in the hottest climate. Now when, from continued evaporation, the air is highly saturated with vapour, though it be invisible and the sky cloudless, if its temperature be suddenly reduced by cold currents descending from above, or rushing from a higher to a lower latitude, its capacity to retain moisture is diminished, clouds are formed, and the result is rain. Air condenses as it cools, and, like a sponge filled with water, and compressed, pours out the water which its diminished capacity cannot hold. How singular, yet how simple, the philosophy of rain. Who but Omniscience

**God is great in His works, the rain and the clouds**

*a* 1 Co. xiii. 12.
*b* Ps. cxlvii. 8.
"The suspension of such a mass of water and its descent, not in a deluge, but in drops of vapoury rain, are the marvel."—*Faust.*

v. 26. *Dr. W. Wishart, Theo.* i. 430; *Dr. J. Free,* 61.

It used to be said of Dr. Chandler, that, after an illness, he always preached in a more evangelical strain than usual. A gentleman who occasionally heard him, said to one of his constant auditors: "Pray, has not the doctor been ill lately?" "Why do you think so?" "Because the sermon was more evangelical than he usually preaches when he is in full health."

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*e Dr. Ure.*

the clouds and the light

*a* Lit. *crashing.*

*b* Ps. xviii. 11; Isa. xl. 22.

*c* Fig. for lowest depths.

Elihu appears to represent the lightning as so intense that it will illuminate the very depths of the sea.

*d Sir T. Browne.*

"Study the light: attempt the high; seek out the soul's bright path; and since the soul is fire of heat intelligential, turn it aye to the all-Fatherly source of light and life: piety purifies the soul to see perpetual apparitions of all grace and power, which to the sight of those who dwell in ignorant sin are never known."—*Bailey.*

"When Alexander the Great visited the Greek philosopher, Diogenes, he asked him if there was anything that he could give him. He got this short answer, 'I want nothing but that you should stand from between me and the sun.' One thing there is which should never satisfy and content us; and that is anything that stands between our souls and Christ.'"—*J. C. Ryle.*

could have devised such an admirable arrangement for watering the earth?[c]

**29–31.** (29) **spreadings,** the wondrous way in wh. they cover the heavens, and lie fold on fold. **noise,**[a] *etc.*, sound of thunder. God is poetically said to have His pavilion amidst dark clouds.[b] (30) **light,** lightning. seen against the dark clouds. **bottom,** marg. roots.[c] God's power seen not only in the waters of the clouds. but also in the waters of the sea (Gen. i. 9). (31) **by them,** rain and lightning, He both executes His judgments, and provides food.

*The shadowing of light.*—Light makes some things invisible. Were it not for darkness and the shadow of the earth, the noblest part of creation had remained unseen, and the stars of heaven as invisible as on the fourth day, when they were created above the horizon with the sun, and there was not an eye to behold them. The greatest mystery of religion is expressed by adumbration; and in the noblest part of Jewish types we find the cherubim shadowing the mercy-seat. Life itself is but the shadow of death. and souls departed but the shadow of the living. All things fall under this name. The sun itself is but the dark simulacrum, and light but the shadow of God.[d]—*Light.*—Every one may be convinced, by his own observation, of the great effect of the presence or absence of light on the growth of plants. As animal life exhibits less striking changes, the influence of light upon it is in general wholly lost sight of. The following experiment can leave no doubt as to its reality and power. Frogs, in passing from the egg to maturity, go through an intermediate state. in which they are called tadpoles. They then not only have no limbs, and possess a tail, but. like fishes, live in water. and breathe by means of gills instead of lungs. Dr. Edwards took a considerable number of frogs in this state. and dividing them into two portions, placed them under water in perfectly similar circumstances, except that the one portion was exposed to light and the other excluded from it. This difference had the very remarkable effect of retarding the transformation of the latter to the state of perfect frogs. Whilst the tadpoles in the light had undergone this change, several of those in the dark retained their original form, but had greatly increased in size. The effect of the absence of light appears likewise to be shown in the colour and structure of the proteus and some other animals which inhabit situations into which light never enters. We cannot suppose that man is altogether insensible to the influence of an agent which is capable of producing so marked an effect on inferior animals; and we can scarcely refrain from in part attributing to this cause not only the peculiar appearance and the prevalence of a particular kind of rickets, accompanied by idiotcy, amongst the inhabitants of some deep and shaded valleys, but also the sallow and sickly complexions of the inhabitants of confined cities, when compared with the ruddy glow on the cheeks of the peasant. The narrowness of the streets, in conjunction with the height of the houses. offers a great and almost irremediable obstacle to the free access of light: and as we can only hope to see it partially removed it becomes the more important to turn the admitted rays of the sun to the greatest advantage. This is far from being done. The dark and almost black external walls absorb nearly all the light which falls upon them; hence little

or no benefit is gained from reflection. An easy remedy is to be found in whitening the walls. The means of doing this are within the reach of all, since the object might be effected by the cheapest lime-wash, as well as by the most costly stucco. In narrow and confined streets the process should be performed regularly and annually. The fall of the year would be the best season, as the fresh white would then afford some compensation for the shortness and dulness of the days. In doing so we have Nature herself for our guide, for we see her in winter overspread everything with a covering of the purest white. Before the return of long and bright days could render the general prevalence of white injurious or unpleasant to the eyes, the smoke of innumerable chimneys would have sufficiently changed the colour to do away with all danger of this kind. The influence of the measure would not be confined to daytime and twilight. In increasing the effect of the street lamps its advantages would be still more conspicuous.[c]

**32, 33.** (32) **clouds,** *etc.*, this verse requires retranslation.[a] The reference is to the lightning, wh. God takes in His hands, and uses as He pleases. (33) **the noise,** of thunder following the lightning flash. **concerning it,** better *Him.* **the cattle,** give notice of his rising up.[b] **vapour,** marg. *that wh. goeth up.*

*Light in darkness.*—It was out of the cloud that the deluge came, yet it is upon it that the bow is set! The cloud is a thing of darkness, yet God chooses it for the place where He bends the arch of light! Such is the way of our God. He knows that we need the cloud, and that a bright sky without a speck or shadow would not suit us in our passage to the Kingdom. Therefore He draws the cloud above us, not once in a lifetime, but many times. But lest the gloom should appal us, He braids the cloud with sunshine—nay, makes it the object which gleams to our eye with the very fairest hues of heaven. Yes, it is not merely light, after the darkness has fled away. That we shall one day know—how fully! But it is light in darkness; light beaming out of a ray produced by that darkness! Water from the rock, wells from the sand, light from the very cloud that darkens—life in the very midst of death! This is the marvel—this is the joy. Peace in trouble, gladness in sorrow; nay, peace and gladness produced by the very tribulation itself; peace and gladness which nothing but that tribulation could have produced! Such is the deep love of God; and such is the way in which He makes all things work together for good to us.[c]

## *CHAPTER THE THIRTY-SEVENTH.*

**1, 2.** (1) **at this,** the thunder Elihu had just spoken of; ch. xxxvi. 33. This part of the discourse may have been delivered amid the loud thunder-claps. **trembleth,** palpitates.[a] (2) **attentively,**[b] Heb. *hear in hearing.* **noise,**[c] or roar. **the sound,** or murmuring; so we speak of the muttering of the thunder.

*The voice of God in nature* (*Arab legend*).—Nimrod attempted the life of the child Abraham, because the soothsayers announced that he would prove formidable to the gods. His mother concealed him for fifteen years in a cave. When she thought that the danger was past, she led him forth from the cave for the first

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"So have I seen the sun with a little ray of distant light challenge all the powers of darkness, and without violence and noise, climbing up the hill, hath made night so to retire that its memory was lost in the joys and sprightliness of the morning."—*Bishop Taylor.*

*c Hodgkin.*

**the shadowing of the light**

*a* "He clotheth His hands with lightning, and giveth it command whom it shall reach."—*Syr. Com.*

"Both hands He covereth over with light, and directeth it as one that hitteth the mark."—*Delitzsch.*

"His hands He covereth with lightning, and He giveth it command against the enemy."—*Revised Eng. Bib.*

*b* "Some animals give various intimations that they are sensible of the approach of a storm."—*Fawcett.*

*c Horatius Bonar.*

**the voice of the Lord**

*a* Comp. *Shakespeare* in "Macbeth." "And make my seated heart knock at my ribs, against the use of nature."

*b* Ps. lxxxix. 7; Je. v. 22.

*c* "The word

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means *commotion*, that wh. is fitted to produce perturbation or d i s q u i e t."—*Barnes.*

"Nature is avariciously frugal; in matter, it allows no atom to elude its grasp; in mind, no thought or feeling to perish. It gathers up the fragments that nothing be lost."—*David Thomas.*

*d Dr. Franke.*

time. It was a wild, stormy night. The angel of the wind was flapping his mighty wings; one solitary star peeped through a rift in the clouds. Abraham saw nothing but darkness, heard nothing but the sighs of the bride of the wind. Then he thought that the pure light which looked down so calmly amid the war of nature's elements must be the Supreme Power which had given unity and order to the universe. He fell down and worshipped it. But when the star faded away, Abraham saw his error, and cried, "I will never worship that which fadeth away." The bright moon now arose resplendent with light. Abraham cried, "This is not my God; I will not worship that which fadeth away." Then the sun arose in all his majesty and power; and the wonders of creation, illuminated by his rays, unfolded themselves to Abraham's astonished gaze. "This is my Lord and my God," he cried in a transport of delight, as he threw himself on the ground to worship. But the sun also finished his course and sank beneath the western horizon. "This is not my Lord and my God," cried Abraham; "I will not worship that which fadeth away. I look up to Him who has created the small and the greatest light, to the Lord of heaven and earth. He is my Lord and my God."[d]

**the noise of the storm**

*a* De. xxii. 12; Nu. xv. 38; Isa. xxiv. 16.

*b Umbreït.*

*c* lxviii. 32, 33.

"Immensity is made up of atoms."—*Leibnitz.*

"The universe is the realised thought of God."—*Carlyle.*

"Nature's self, which is the breath of God, or His pure word by miracle revealed."—*Wordsworth.*

*d J. S. Bigg.*

**3—5.** (3) **directeth,** or sendeth it forth. Or read, "Under the whole heaven is its darting." Reference may be to the zigzag course of the lightning. **ends,** *Heb.* wings, or skirts. Earth was sometimes compared to a bird with wings spread out; sometimes to an extended garment.[a] (4) **of his excellency,** *i.e.* majesty and power. **not stay them,** hold them back. He will send flash after flash. Some think reference may be to the hail and rain that accompany thunder.[b] (5) **marvellously,** thunder in Arabia is sublimely terrible.[c]

*God revealed in nature.*—

Nature is still, as ever, the thin veil
Which half conceals, and half reveals the face,
And lineaments supernal of our King,—
The modifying medium through which
His glories are exhibited to man.—
The grand repository where He hides
His mighty thoughts, to be dug out like diamonds,
Still is the day irradiate with His glory,
Flowing in steady, sun-streaked, ocean gush
From His transcendent nature,—still at night
O'er our horizon trail the sable robes
Of the Eternal One, with all their rich
Embroidery and emblazonment of stars.[d]

**the snow, the rain—winter**

*a Spk. Com.* Ex. iv. 6; 2 Sa. xxiii. 20.

*b* "God seals the works of men in winter, in order that they may recognise His work, and may adore Him, who enables them to work, and also

**6—8.** (6) **snow,** "the fall of snow is always portentous to the mind of an Eastern."[a] **be thou,** or *fall* thou: but the term *be* appears to be the more vigorous. **small . . great,** ordinary gentle rains, and the severe rains attending thunder-storms. (7) **sealeth up,** stops, brings to a standstill. This is true of storm-times, but more so of winter-time, and to it Elihu may be here referring. **his work,** and so realise their continued dependence on Him.[b] (8) **places,** lairs. Some require sheltering, some become torpid,[c] hybernate.

*The teaching of snow.*—It is well to mark the ways of God in nature as well as in grace. I. We see the wisdom and goodness

of God in the formation of snow, as indeed we do in all the varied productions and operations in the natural world. II. But let us look at the uses of snow for a further exemplification of this wisdom and goodness of God. 1. Snow-water is peculiarly purifying; 2. Snow waters the earth. III. The evanescent nature of snow. IV. Snow may teach the power of God and the impotency of man.[d]

*The snow.*—

The snow is on the mountain,
The frost is on the vale,
The ice hangs o'er the fountain,
The storm rides on the gale;
The earth is bare and naked,
The air is cold and drear,
The sky with snow-clouds flaked,
And dense foul fogs appear;
The sun shines not so brightly
Through the dark murky skies,
The nights grow longer nightly,
And thus the winter dies.

Thus falls man, his season past, the blight hath ta'en his bloom;
Summer gone, the autumn blast consigns him to the tomb:
Then the winter cold and drear, with pestilential breath,
Blows upon his silent bier, and whispers—this is death.[e]

**9, 10.** (9) **south,** *lit.* chamber: or secret place.[a] **whirlwind,** ch. i. 19.[b] **north,** *Heb.* scattering winds; "cold from the cloud-sweepers."[c] "Winds fr. the northern quarter, in all places north of the equator, are the source of cold."[d] (10) **breath,** gentle influence in the still night, not by violent wind. **straitened,** congealed; held in from flowing; forcibly drawn together.

*Whirlwinds in the East* (*v.* 9).—It was about this time when the wind began to be felt by us, coming in short and sudden puffs, which, instead of cooling or refreshing, oppressed us even more than the calm; each of those blasts seeming like the hot and dry vapour of an oven, just at the moment of its being opened. The southern desert was now covered with a dull red mist, not unlike the sunrise skies of our northern climates on a rainy morning; and soon afterwards we saw large columns of sand and dust whirled up into the air, and carried along in a body over the plain with a slow and stately motion. One of these passed within a few hundred yards of us, to the northward, having been driven over a large tract of stony land, to a distance of perhaps twenty miles from the place of its rising. It was apparently from eighty to a hundred feet in diameter, and was certainly of sufficient force, by its constant whirling motion, to throw both men and animals off their legs, so that if crossing a crowded caravan, and broken by the interruption of its course, the danger of suffocation to those buried beneath its fall would be very great, though, if persons were prepared for it, it might not perhaps be fatal.[e]

**11—13.** (11) **by wa'tering,** the precise meaning is difficult to fix.[a] Following *Delitzsch* and *Spk. Com.*, we prefer, "With water, or vapour, He loadeth the clouds:" "loadeth them with a burdensome freight of water, to be discharged in rain." **bright**

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disables them fr. working when He wills."—*Wordsworth.*

c "The desolation of the fields, at Christ's birth, is poetically graphic."—*Fausset.*

Ps. civ. 22, cxl. 2.

v. 7. *J. C. Dieteric, Antiq.* 349; *J. Roe*, 221.

d *J. S. Broad, M.A.*

"The respect for, and the study of, the works of creation, tend to make us wiser and happier, and lead us to the contemplation of the omniscient Dispenser of the objects we admire."—*Maund.*

e *Ousely.*

**the winter and the frost**

*a* Compare Job ix. 9.

*b* "*Sarary* says of the south wind, wh. blows in Egypt from Feb. to May, that it fills the atmosphere with a fine dust, rendering breathing difficult... Sometimes it appears in the form of a furious whirlwind, which advances with great rapidity, and which is highly injurious to those who traverse the desert. It drives before it clouds of burning sand: the horizon appears covered with a thick veil, and the sun appears red as blood."—*Barnes.*

c *Delitzsch.*

d *Barnes.*

e *J. S. Buckingham.*

**rains ex-**

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haust the clouds

*a* "For irrigation is the thick cloud stretched out."—*Prof. Lee.*

*b* The burst of lightning shattering the clouds appears to be described.

*c* Pr. xi. 14.

*d* For correction, as Deluge; for mercy, as in yearly overflow of the Nile.

Ps. cxlviii. 8; Joel ii. 23.

*e* *Beecher.*

"Careful observers may foretell the hour (by sure prognostics) when to dread a shower: while rain depends, the pensive cat gives o'er her frolics, and pursues her tail no more. If you be wise, then go not far to dine; you'll spend in coach-hire more than save in wine. A coming shower your shooting corns presage; old aches will throb, your hollow tooth will rage."—*Broome.*

"The more a man follows Nature, and is obedient to her laws, the longer he will live: the farther he deviates from these, the shorter will be his existence."—*Hufeland.*

c'oud,[b] *marg.* cloud of His light: returning brightness figured as if it were a cloud scattering the rain-clouds. (12) it, the cloud of light, or lightning. counsels, *lit.* steering.[c] on the face, refreshing the thirsty surface of the earth. (13) he causeth,[d] whatever may be the mission of the rain, etc.; God sends it, God controls it, for the accomplishment of His purposes.

*The power of rain.*—Rain is most potential, not when it is yet rain, but when it is in the lion's paw; when it is in the foot of the deer; when it is in the horn of the unicorn; when it is in the hand and brain of man; when it has been organised and exists in some invisible latent form, giving to life its potency. Not printed truth is the most potential form of the truth. When it has disappeared as truth and reappeared as life, then it is the truth of God, as rain and snow, which, coming down in visible forms, lose their life, find it again, and are more mighty than ever."[e]

*Signs of rain.*—

The hollow winds begin to blow;
The clouds look black, the glass is low;
The soot falls down, the spaniels sleep,
And spiders from their cobwebs peep.
Last night the sun went pale to bed,
The moon in halos hid her head;
The boding shepherd heaves a sigh,
For, see, a rainbow spans the sky;
The walls are damp, the ditches smell,
Closed is the pink-eyed pimpernel.
Hark! how the chairs and tables crack;
Old Betty's joints are on the rack;
Loud quack the ducks, the peacocks cry;
The distant hills are seeming nigh.
How restless are the snorting swine—
The busy flies disturb the kine;
Low o'er the grass the swallow wings;
The cricket, too, how sharp he sings!
Puss on the hearth, with velvet paws,
Sits, wiping o'er her whiskered jaws.
Through the clear stream the fishes rise,
And nimbly catch th' incautious flies;
The glowworms, numerous and bright,
Illumed the dewy dell last night.
At dusk, the squalid toad was seen,
Hopping and crawling o'er the green;
The whirling dust the wind obeys,
And in the rapid eddy plays;
The fog has changed his yellow vest,
And in a russet coat is dress'd.
Though June, the air is cold and still;
The mellow blackbird's voice is shrill.
My dog, so altered in his taste,
Quits mutton-bones on grass to feast;
And see yon rooks, how odd their flight
They imitate the gliding kite,
And seem precipitate to fall,
As if they felt the piercing ball.

'Twill surely rain; I see, with sorrow,
Our jaunt must be put off to-morrow.*f*

**14, 15.** (14) **this,** *i.e.* the lesson conveyed by such things. **stand still,** be calm and quiet; cease from restless complainings. (15) **dost thou know,**[a] if Job could not compass, and fitly explain God's work in nature, how could he expect to explain the more difficult questions of Div. Providence? **light,** lightning. **shine,** or flash.

*God in nature.*—

A present Deity in all.
It is His presence that diffuses charms
Unspeakable o'er mountain, wood, and stream;
To think that He who hears the heavenly choir
Hearkens complacent to the woodland song;
To think that He who rolls yon solar sphere,
Uplifts the warbling songster to the sky.
To mark His presence in the mighty bow
That spans the clouds, as in the tints minute
Of tiniest flower; to hear His awful voice
In thunders speak, and whisper in the gale;
To know and feel His care for all that lives:
'Tis this that makes the barren waste appear
A fruitful field, each grove a paradise.[b]

**16, 17.** (16) **balancings,** poisings; attemperings of weight: arrangements by which they are upheld, or fall as vapour, and rain.[a] (17) **garments are warm,** through the changed atmosphere giving warmth to thy body.

*Spirit of Nature.*—

And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean, and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things.[b]

**18–20.** (18) **spread out,** "firmament" is regarded as a solid body spread out, Gen. i. 6, 7.[a] **strong,** *etc.*, "wh. for firmness is like a molten mirror." **looking glass,** mirror, wh. was made of plates of metal highly polished.[b] The sky was regarded as a solid bright expanse, so like a mirror. (19) **order,** frame: carefully and fittingly arrange. **darkness,** of mind: ignorance. Elihu again intimates that Job's hurried and intense speeches were unworthy. (20) **if . . up,** more correctly, "shall one wish to be destroyed?" as Job had done.[c]

*The pleasure of surveying the heavens.*—I invariably experience a variety of sensations when I "survey the heavens" on a calm clear night, about the end of the month of May. I can then inhale the sweets of the woodbine and other flowers, whose fragrance is drawn out by the gentle dews of evening. The nightingale breaks the silence by his sweet and varied notes; and the full moon "walking in brightness," and rendered still

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*f In Jones.*

the wondrous works of God
Job v. 9; Ps. lxv. 10, 2[illegible], Jer. x. 12, 13.

v. 14. *J. Barrow,* ii. 21; *J. Angell,* 10; *J. Chrysostom* i. 2[illegible]; *R. Thompson,* 2[illegible]; *C. S. Ives,* 32.

"What throbbings of deep joy pulsate through all I see; from the full lily whose nectarious sheath is glittering in the moon, up through the system of created things, even to the flaming ranks of seraphim."—*Alford*
*b Grahame.*

the mysteriousness of a cloudy firmament

*a* "The phenomena of the clouds would be among the first that would attract the attention of man, and in the early times of Job it is not to be supposed that the subject could be explained."—*Barnes.*
*b Wordsworth.*

the strength and beauty of the sky

*a* "Elsewhere the hemispheric firmament is likened to a clear sapphire (Ex. xxiv. 10; a covering (Ps. civ. 2); a [illegible] (Isa. xl. 22)."—*Delitzsch.*
*b* "Specimens are found in Egyptian tombs of [illegible] and quality."—*Dict. Class.*
*c* Durst a man

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speak before Him, that he is, without cause, being destroyed?"—*Umbreit.* Ec. v. 2; Job xiii. 3, 18—22. The love of Nature is no idle quality, it is rich in the best results.

*d Jesse.*

**the bright light in the cloud**

*a* LXX. "clouds shining like gold."

*b Barnes* applies to some special sign of God's approach by symbol of light; and observes that the ancients regarded the northern regions as the residences of the gods.

*c* "All God's attributes harmonise with each other, and find their perfect manifestation in love."—*Spk. Com.* *d* La. iii. 32, 33; He. xii. 10.

*e* Mat. xi. 25; 1 Co. i. 26.

*v.* 21. *C. E. Kennaway,* 140.

*v.* 22. *Alex. Pirie, Wks.* 3.

*vv.* 23, 24. *H. Wharton,* ii. 76.

*f Dr. Thomas.*

"If a man whose body was radiant and bright as the sun were walking through a land of Egyptian darkness, all who followed him would actually walk in the light, and the closer they kept to him the clearer their light would be and the safer their road. He who follows Christ follows One from

more beautiful by the lustre of so many shining stars, which appear in the wide-extended firmament, completes the loveliness of this nocturnal scene. Then I begin to reflect upon my own insignificance, and to ask myself what I am, that the great Author of the universe should be mindful of me. His mercy, however, then presents itself to me, as well as His majesty, and the former affects me more than the latter. I listen to the bird which appears to be pouring forth his little tribute of gratitude and praise, and my heart prompts me to do the same. The very perfume of the flowers seems to be an incense ascending up to heaven; and with these feelings I am able to enjoy the calm tranquillity of the evening.[d]

**21—24.** (21) **now,** while the storm-cloud hung so thick and low. So there was a darkness about the spirit of Job wh. kept him fr. discerning God's gracious ways. **cleanseth them,** cleareth them: so that the sunlight comes again to view. (22) **fair weather,**[a] or golden splendour, sunshine.[b] **terrible majesty,** therefore there should be cherished holy awe of Him. (23) **find him out,** so as fully to know the mystery of His ways. **excellent,**[c] excelling others; and beyond our thought. **not afflict,** as an end, but as a means; not in mere punishment, only as chastisement.[d] (24) **fear him,** with reverent, godly fear. **wise,** *i.e.* in their own conceits.[e]

*The bright light in the clouds.*—Here appears to be a figurative allusion to the occurrences which are under the control of Divine Providence under the similitude of clouds, and the bright design which is sometimes beyond the reach of the human mind to understand. I. These occurrences resemble the clouds sometimes—1. In their sudden appearance; 2. In their various magnitude; 3. In their happy effects. II. There is a bright light in every cloud, or something cheering in all the dispensations of Providence. 1. The character of God is a bright light; 2. The promises are a bright light in the clouds; 3. The past conduct of God is a bright light in the clouds. III. There are, however, various causes which frequently prevent us from seeing the bright light in the clouds. 1. Constitutional or physical dejection will do this; 2. There are, however, other causes, both intellectual and moral, such as—(*a*) Defective views of Divine truth; (*b*) Want of faith in the wisdom and goodness of God.—*The bright light in the cloud.*—I shall take the text to illustrate the disposition of men to look upon the dark side of things. I. The text will apply to the sceptic in relation to the dark things of revelation. There are several things which give the darkest of them a bright light. 1. There is the love of the Infinite Father; 2. The unspotted holiness of our Great Example; 3. The provision He has made for our spiritual recovery; 4. The existence of a blessed immortality. II. The text will apply to the factious fault-finders with God's providence. III. The text will apply to the misanthropic in relation to the character of the race. IV. The text will apply to the desponding Christian in relation to his experience. Learn—1. To cultivate the habit of looking on the bright side of things; 2. To anticipate the world of future light.[f]

*Light in darkness.*—

The sun's bright rays are hidden,
The rains in floods descend;

The winds with angry murmurs
The stoutest branches bend.
A gloom the face of nature
As with a pall doth shroud;
Its influence all are feeling,
But, look beyond the cloud!

For lo! at length appeareth
A little streak of light,
Increasing every moment
Till all again is bright.
So, however dark our prospects,
Howe'er by grief we're bowed,
It will not last for ever;
We'll look beyond the cloud.

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whom light streams upon the road we are to go—an illuminated Man—laying bare its hidden pitfalls, discovering its stumbling-stones, showing all its turnings and windings, and enabling us to walk safely, surely, and cheerfully on our way (John viii. 12)."—*G. S. Bowes.*

## *CHAPTER THE THIRTY-EIGHTH.*

**God speaks to Job out of the whirlwind**

**1—3.** (1) **the Lord answered,** by a voice heard: no actual form was seen. It may, however, be that the writer of the book does but put in methodical form the thoughts suggested by God to Job's mind in connection with the great tempest.[a] **Job,** not the friends; not Elihu; but Job himself: this favours the idea that it may have been a voice in Job's heart. (2) **darkeneth counsel,** makes the subject darker.[b] (3) **gird,** *etc.*, for contending the matter with God, as he had desired to do.[c] **like a man,** boldly, courageously; as one entereth upon a battle.

*The Word of God as a sword.*—I. A sword has a maker; the Word of God has an Author—the Spirit. II. A sword has a form made after a pattern; the Word of God has a style of language, a form of moral and religious truths, fashioned after the similitude of the Divine mind. III. A sword has a scabbard; so has the Word of God, which is the letter, the type, the paper. IV. A sword has point, edge, brightness, weight; so the Word of God has point to pierce the heart, edge to divide asunder, brightness so as to be a mirror, weight so as to be mighty to the pulling down and breaking down of strongholds. V. A sword is for defence against enemies; so is the Word of God. VI. A sword to be of any practical use must be used; so the Word of God. VII. A sword in the hand of some persons may do mischief; so the Word of God. VIII. A sword used by proper persons in a right way, and at a right time, does great exploits; so the Word of God.[d]

*The power of the Word.*—All human speculations have alloy about them—that Word is perfect. All human speculations fail—that Word abideth. The Jew hated it—but it lived on, while the veil was torn away from the shrine which the Shekinah had forsaken, and while Jerusalem itself was destroyed. The Greek derided it—but it has seen his philosophy effete, and his Acropolis in ruins. The Roman threw it to the flames—but it rose from its ashes, and swooped down upon the fallen eagle. The reasoner cast it into the furnace, which his own malignity had heated "seven times hotter than its wont," but it came out without the smell of fire. The Papist fastened serpents around it to poison it—but it shook them off and felt no harm. The infidel cast it overboard in a tempest of sophistry and sarcasm—but it rode

*a* Spk. Com.

*b* "Obscureth and distorteth the wise and gracious counsel of God in afflicting him, by words without knowledge, in wh. he presumptuously asserts his own righteousness, and impugns God's justice."—*Wordsworth.*

Lu. vii. 30.

*c* Job ix. 34, 35, xiii. 22, xxiii. 3, xxxi. 35.

*v.* 2. *Dr. J. Disney,* iv. 53; *J. H. Newman, Justification,* 1.

*vv.* 2, 3. *Cyril, Cat. Lec.* ii. 90.

*d J. Bate.*

"'Well, Tamby, you have a difficult task before you: gird up your loins.' 'Come, help me to gird this *sádi* (*i.e.* mantle, or shawl, round my loins; I have a long way to run.' 'Poor fellow!' he soon gave it up; his loins were

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gallantly upon the crest of the proud waters. And it is living still—yet heard in the loudest swelling of the storm—it has been speaking all the while—it is speaking now. The world gets higher at its every tone, and it shall ultimately speak in power, until it has spoken this dismantled planet up again into the smiling brotherhood of worlds which kept their first estate, and God, welcoming the prodigal, shall look at it as He did in the beginning, and pronounce it to be very good.[c]

**human life a modern thing in the creation**

4, 5. (4) **where,** *etc.*, ironical allusion to the comparison between Job's short life and God's eternity. To understand the cause of things man should have been present at their origin. Questions such as these would most effectively humble the spirit of Job. **laid the foundations,** *lit.* "when I founded it:" created or established it. **hast understanding,** art capable of judging. (5) **laid the measures,** as the architect. **stretched the line,** as the carpenter and builder.[a]

*The insignificance of a man as a creature.*—This subject implies two facts. 1. That God has made special communications to man; 2. That man should pay special attention to them. Adopting a somewhat paraphrastic method of treatment—I. What is thine intellect to Mine? II. What is thine age to Mine? III. What is thy power to Mine? IV. What is thy independency to Mine? For He is—1. Independent in being; 2. In action. This subject serves—(1) To rebuke all disposition to pronounce an opinion upon the ways of God; (2) To suggest that our grand effort ought to be to cultivate a loving trust in the Divine character, rather than to comprehend the Divine procedure; (3) To enable us to appreciate the glorious service of Christianity.[b]

*Permanency of the laws of nature.*—To the ancients who lived in the infancy of the world, or rather in the infancy of man's experience, the question whether the laws of nature have that degree of permanence and fixity that can render them subjects of systematic discussion, or whether, on the other hand, the qualities of natural agents are subject to mutation from lapse of time, was very rational, and hence their distinctions between corruptible and incorruptible. Thus, according to some of them, the matter only of the celestial spheres is pure, immutable, and incorruptible, while all sublunary things are in a state of lapse; the world becoming paralysed with age, and man himself deteriorating in character and diminishing at once in intellectual and bodily stature. But to the moderns, who have the additional experience of some thousand years, the question of permanence is in a great measure decided in the affirmative. The profound speculations of modern astronomers, grounding their conclusions on observations made at very remote periods, have proved to demonstration that one at least of the great powers of nature—the force of gravitation, the main bond and support of the material universe—has undergone no change in intensity from a high antiquity. The stature of mankind is just what it was three thousand years ago, as the specimens of mummies which have been exhumed at various times sufficiently show. The intellect of Newton, La Place, or La Grange, may stand in fair competition with that of Archimedes, Aristotle, or Plato; and the virtues and patriotism of Washington, with the brightest examples of antiquity.[c]

not well girded.'" —*Roberts.*

*a W. M. Punshon.*

*vv.* 4-7. *Bp. Gray, Disc.* 1.

*b Dr. Thomas.*

"We talk of human life as a journey; but how variously is that journey performed! There are those who come forth girt and shod and mantled to walk on velvet lawns and smooth terraces, where every gale is arrested and every beam is tempered. There are others who walk on the alpine paths of life, against driving misery, and through stormy sorrows, over sharp afflictions; walk with bare feet and naked breast, jaded, mangled, and chilled."—*Sydney Smith.*

"Meditation here may think down hours to moments. Here the heart may give a useful lesson to the head, and learning wiser grow without his books."—*Cowper.*

"Life is at most a meeting and a parting! a glimpse into the world of might have been."—*Massey.*

*c Herschel.*

**6, 7.** (6) **foundations,** *Heb.* basis, as of a column or pedestal. Marg. *sockets;* this, however, would better suit a *tent* than a building. **fastened,** or sunk.[a] **corner stone,** wh. sustains the principal weight of the building.[b] (7) **morning stars,** if this refers to the actual stars, it intimates that they existed before our world was set in order for man. The expression may be a symbolic description of the angels. **sons of God,** the angels.[c] **shouted,** in chorus.[d]

*The music of the stars.—*

Ye brightly beaming stars!
Have ye no music as ye roll along?
Or is it, that to us earth's discord mars
Your heavenly song?

The music of the spheres!
Was it a fiction of the olden time?
Or are there not who hear with wakeful ears
That strain sublime?

Let thought still hear you raise
The joyful anthem which ye sang of yore;
And as the sons of God then joined your praise,
Let man adore.[e]

**8—11.** (8) **within doors,** gates, such as shut up water in a dam: flood-gates. Such are the *shores,* holding back the ocean.[a] **brake forth,** at the uplifting of the mountains, the swirling waters were set in place by God. The mighty sea is, to God, only as a babe. (9) **garment,** of this ocean-babe. **thick darkness,** mist as its swaddling clothes. (10) **brake up for it,** lit. *brake over it.* **decreed place,** or decree.[b] (11) **proud waves,** a beautiful poetic figure. The waves seem as if they would overwhelm, but God's rugged rocks and ribbed sand effectually quell their pride.[c]

*The ocean.—*

Oh, thou, clothed round with raiment of white waves!
Thy brave brows lightening through the grey wet air,
Thou, lulled with sea-sounds of a thousand caves,
And lit with sea-shine to thine inland lair,
Whose freedom clothed the naked souls of slaves,
And stripped the muffled souls of tyrants bare,
Oh, by the centuries of thy glorious graves,
By the live light of the earth that was thy care,
Live—thou must not be dead,
Live—let thine armed head
Lift itself up to sunward and the fair
Daylight of time and man,
Thine head republican,
With the same splendour on thine helmless hair
That in his eyes kept up a light
Who on thy glory gazed away their sacred sight.[d]

**12—15.** (12) **morning,** to arise and appear. **since thy days,** since thou wast created. **dayspring,** dawn:[a] aurora. **know his place,** the point of sky in which morning first appears differs through the year. Yet perfect order controls the variety. (13) **ends,** wings; extremities. **wicked,** *etc.,* whose evil schemes are spoiled by returning light.[b] (14) **as clay,**[c] *i.e.* the earth is directly influenced by returning light and warmth

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the morning stars singing at the creation

a "It [the earth] rises to a fair mansion-stone that sticks or settles down into each succeeding bed, until it becomes solid."—*Lucretius.*

b Ps. cxvi. 22; Zech. iv. 7.

c This repres. of creation is a poetical development of the first chap. of Gen., full, however, of personifications and metaphors of wh. no trace is to be found in that document. The singing and shouts are, so to speak, an echo of the Creator's declaration, "and saw that it was good."—*Speaker's Com.*

d Comp. Ezek. iii. 10—13; Zech. iv. 7; Lu. ii. 9—13; Rev. xix. 1—6.

e *Bernard Barton.*

the boundaries of the ocean

a Gen. i. 9, 10; Jo. v. 22.

b "The shore, with its broken precipices and rugged rocks is God's decree wh. He has set to restrain the raging of the sea."—*Wordsworth.*

"Then I broke its course with my barrier."—*Luther.*

Vulg., "I surrounded it with my limits."

LXX. "I placed boundaries about it."

c Is. lxxxix. 9 Mar. iv. 39.

d *A. C. Swinburne*

the day-dawn

a Lu. i. 78.

b "This has a special reference to Job's dis-

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course, ch. xxiv. He there represented the evil-doers as working with impunity, in darkness; here he is told that the light, which they hate and dread, has a direct mission to overthrow them." — *Spk. Com.*

*c* "The expression turned may poss. refer to the rolling cylinder seal, such as is found in Babylon, which leaves its impressions on the clay as it is turned about." —*Fausset.*

*d* Pro. xiii. 9.

*e* Eze. xxx. 22.

*f Harmer.*

**the size of the earth**

*a* Ge. vii. 11.

"The gushing forth."—*Gesenius.*

*b* Ps. lxxvii. 19.

*c C. H. Spurgeon.*

"To a vain, boasting fellow, it is said, 'Yes, yes; the sea is only knee-deep to thee.' 'It is all true; thou hast measured the sea.'" — *Roberts.*

"The ocean's surfy, slow, deep, mellow voice, full of mystery and awe, moanin' over the dead it holds in its bosom, or lullin' them to unbroken slumbers in the chambers of its vasty depths."—*Haliburton.*

*d Dana.*

they stand, the objects of earth; grass and flowers lift themselves up to the light; or *stand out*, radiant with rich hues. (15) **their light**, the light that the wicked prefer is night and darkness.[d] **high arm**,[e] of the wicked. **broken**, by losing its opportunity; the night in wh. it works.

*Turned as clay to the seal* (*v.* 14).—The birds pillage the granary of Joseph extremely, where the corn of Egypt is deposited that is paid as a tax to the grand seignior, for it is quite uncovered at the top, there being little or no rain in that country; its doors however are kept carefully sealed, but its inspectors do not make use of wax upon this occasion, but put their seal upon a handful of clay, with which they cover the lock of the door. This serves instead of wax, and it is visible; things of the greatest value might be safely sealed up in the same manner. Had Junius known this circumstance, or had he at least reflected on it, he would not perhaps have explained Job xxxviii. 14, "It is turned as clay to the seal," of the potters adorning clay with various paintings, or various embossings; especially had he considered that the productions of the wheel of the potter, in the age and the country of Job, were, in all probability, very clumsy, unadorned things, since even still in Egypt, the ancient source of arts, the ewer, which is made, according to Norden, very clumsy, is one of the best pieces of earthenware that they have there, all the art of the potter, in that country, consisting in an ability to make some vile pots or dishes, without varnish.[f]

**16—18.** (16) **entered**, so as either to understand or control. **springs**, lit. *weepings;* prob. fountains of the great deep.[a] **search**, or recesses: deep places, caverns.[b] (17) **gates of death**, Sheol, or Hades, the abodes of the dead. **shadow of death**, ch. x. 21. (18) **perceived**, so as fully to comprehend.

*The unknowable* (*v.* 16).—Some things in nature must remain a mystery to the most intelligent investigator. Universal knowledge for God alone. Why then be curious about things I cannot understand? What I cannot gain by intellect, I can possess by affection.[c]

*The sea a type of the infinite.*—

Type of the infinite. I look away
Over thy billows, and I cannot stay
My thought upon a resting-place, or make
A shore beyond my vision, where they break;
But on my spirit stretches, till 'tis pain
To think; then rests, and then puts forth again.
Thou hold'st me by a spell; and on thy beach
I feel all soul; and thoughts unmeasured reach
Far back beyond all date. And O! how old
Thou art to me. For countless years thou'st roll'd;
Before an ear did hear thee, thou didst mourn,
Prophet of sorrows, o'er a race unborn,
Waiting, thou mighty minister of death,
Lonely thy work, ere man had drawn his breath.
At last thou didst it well! The dread command
Came, and thou swept'st to death the breathing land;
And then once more unto the silent heaven
Thy lone and melancholy voice was given.[d]

**19—21.** (19) **way**, place wherein ;[a] or way to the place. Light is properly conceived as coming from an immense distance. Light and darkness are here personified, and regarded as each having its own abode. (20) **bound**, can Job determine the bounds or limits of light and darkness? (21) **knowest . . born**, the creature who was but of yesterday might well be silent and submissive before God.

*Light.*—

> Hail, holy light, offspring of Heaven firstborn.
> Or of th' Eternal co-eternal beam,
> May I express thee, unblamed? Since God is light,
> And never but in unapproached light,
> Dwelt from eternity, dwelt then in thee,
> Bright effluence of bright essence increate.[b]

*Light and colour.*—All colours depend on light. Light, therefore, ought previously to be examined ; and with it its opposite, darkness. With regard to light, to make it a cause capable of producing the sublime, it must be attended with some circumstances besides its bare faculty of showing other objects. Mere light is too common a thing to make a strong impression on the mind, and without a strong impression nothing can be sublime. But such a light as that of the sun, immediately exerted on the eye, as it overpowers the sense, is a very great idea. Light of an inferior strength to this, if it moves with great celerity, has the same power ; for lightning is certainly productive of grandeur, which it owes chiefly to the extreme velocity of its motion. A quick transition from light to darkness, or from darkness to light, has yet a greater effect. But darkness is more productive of sublime ideas than light. Our great poet was convinced of this ; and indeed so full was he of this idea, so entirely possessed with the power of a well-managed darkness, that, in describing the appearance of the Deity, amidst that profusion of magnificent images which the grandeur of his subject provokes him to pour out upon every side, he is far from forgetting the obscurity which surrounds the most incomprehensible of all beings, but

> "—— With the majesty of darkness round
> Circles His throne."

And what is no less remarkable, our author had the secret of preserving this idea, even when he seemed to depart the farthest from it, when he describes the light and glory which flow from the Divine presence - a light which by its very excess is converted into a species of darkness :

> "Dark with excessive light Thy skirts appear."

Here is an idea not only poetical in a high degree, but strictly and philosophically just. Extreme light, by overcoming the organs of sight, obliterates all objects, so as in its effect exactly to resemble darkness. After looking for some time at the sun, two black spots, the impression which it leaves, seem to dance before our eyes. Thus are two ideas, as opposite as can be imagined, reconciled in the extremes of both ; and both, in spite of their opposite nature, brought to concur in producing the sublime. And this is not the only instance wherein the opposite extremes operate equally in favour of the sublime, which in all things abhors mediocrity.[c]

**22 23.** (22) **treasures**, or treasuries ; store-houses. "Natural

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the way of the light

[a] LXX., the tent.

"But see the sun has set and now to bless with quietness and beauty, softer far than that of day, with pensive tenderness as best befits the scene the evening star lights up its trembling lamp, to greet pale Cynthia's car."—*Barton.*

[b] *Milton.*

"You have noticed the lighting of the streets or of a public building — how when the first lamp is lit it is plainly seen, and disperses in part the surrounding darkness; but when the second, third, fourth, and all the lamps are lit, the light meets light, ray blends with ray, until the whole place is illuminated. Thus it is with the spread of Christian light. The light of life shining from one believer joins and blends with that of another; the light of one neighbourhood with an adjoining one; the light of nation with nation until the whole world becomes filled with the light of the glorious Gospel of the blessed God."—*John Bate.*

[c] *Burke.*

the treasures of the snow

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phenomena, their causes, uses, and effects, are alike inscrutable." (23) **time of trouble**, to use as agents in the chastisement of men. Hailstones have been employed by God in connection with battle.[a]

*The treasures of the snow.*—I. Have we considered the beauty of those treasures? The snow beautiful in itself, and imparts beauty. II. The preserving and fructifying powers contained in those treasures? III. There is, too, a purging and purifying power in those treasures of the snow. IV. What silent forces belong to the snow? V. Have we considered in the hour of our great bereavements the treasures of consolation suggested by the snow?[b]

*The architecture of the frost.*—

Down swept the chill wind from the mountain peak,
From the snow five thousand summers old;
On open wold and hill-top bleak,
It had gathered all the cold,
And whirled in like sleet in the wanderer's cheek:
It had carried a shiver everywhere;
From the unleaved boughs and pastures bare.
The little brook heard it, and built a roof
'Neath which he could house him, winter proof:
All night, by the white stars' frosty gleams,
He groined his arches, and matched his beams;
Slender and clear were his crystal spars,
As the lashes of light that trim the stars;
He sculptured every summer delight,
In his halls and chambers out of sight;
Sometimes his tinkling waters slipt
Down through a frost-leaved forest crypt,
Long sparkling aisles of steel-stemmed trees
Bending to counterfeit a breeze;
Sometimes, the roof no fretwork knew,
But silvery mosses that downward grew;
Sometimes it was carved, in sharp relief,
With quaint arabesques of ice-fern leaf,
Sometimes it was simply smooth and clear
For the gladness of heav'n to shine through; and here
He had caught the nodding bulrush tops,
And hung them thickly with diamond drops,
Which crystalled the beams of moon and sun,
And made a star of every one:
No mortal builder's most rare device
Could match this winter palace of ice;
'Twas as if every image that mirrored lay
In his depths serene through the summer day,
Each flitting shadow of earth and sky,
Lest the happy model should be lost,
Had been mimicked in fairy masonry,
By the elfin builders of the frost.[c]

**24. light**, of day, not here lightning. **parted**, distributed over the earth. Light appears to start from a point in the east, and then spread over all the earth and sky; can Job fully explain how this is done? **which**, it is better to repeat the words, *in what way*. The inquiry is made concerning two things, light

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a Ex. ix. 22—26; Jos. x. 11; Ps. xviii. 13, 14; Is. xxviii. 17—21; Re. xvi. 21.

"*Wetzstein* has in his possession a writing of Muhammed el-Chatîb el-Bosrawi, in which he describes a fearful fall of snow in Hauran, by wh. in Feb., 1860, innumerable herds of sheep, goats, and camels, and also many human beings, perished." — *Delitzsch.*

*v.* 22. *A. M. Toplady*, v. 471.
*vv.* 22, 23. *A. Shanks*, 430.

b *The Study.*

"The frost is God's plough, which He drives through every inch of ground in the world, opening each clod, and pulverising the whole."—*Fuller.*

"M. Boussingault, during the winter of 1841-2, found that a thermometer plunged in snow to the depth of a decimetre (about 4 inches) sometimes marked nine degrees of heat greater than at the surface."—*Arago.*

"I think better of snow-storms since I find that if they keep a man's body indoors, they bring his mind out."—*Prescott.*

c *Lowell.*

**the mystery of light**

a "The light and the east wind are thus associated together, as both come from one

and wind[a] **east wind**, spoken of as a kind of personification of all winds, which, beginning at some point, diffuse themselves over the earth.

*Divine mysteries.*—I. The question here proposed. It concerns two familiar things, the light and the wind. Though familiar, they are little understood even at this time. II. What this question suggests. If there are mysteries in the world of nature, should we be surprised to find mysteries in the world of revelation, or in the kingdom of grace? Nay, should we not much more expect to find mysteries there than in nature? See the words of our Lord, Jo. iii. 7—13. Do we exclude things from our belief because they are mysteries? How little shall we believe if we believe only what we fully comprehend! Jesus gives us the key to the understanding of some difficult things (Jo. vii. 17), and St. Paul assures us that there is something man needs more than the understanding of all mysteries, and all knowledge (1 Cor. xiii. 2).

*Nature unsympathising.*—

A comely face hath Nature, but no heart.
None! Are you sad? she smiles. Is your grief past,
And gladness come? Her skies are overcast.
In your chameleon moods she hath no part.
Praise her—your warmest words will ne'er impart
A flush the more to her full loveliness—
Flout her, and she will offer you, no less,
Flowers, fruitage, all the effluence of her art.
Die, she will send her merriest birds to sing
Outside your window, and upon your brow
Shed showers of sunbeams, in bright overflow:
Go down into your grave—no cloud will fling
Its shade, in sorrow that your tale is told:
She is a comely mother, but stone-cold.[b]

**25—28.** (25) **divided a watercourse**, or riven a channel. **overflowing**, or torrents.[a] These do not come in mere floods, but, according to appointment, as if in canals cut for them. **way for the lightning**, which is the usual precursor of heavy rains in the East.[b] (26) **no man is**, the tenantless steppe; lonely wastes; the Divine designs in such apparently useless outlay cannot be traced.[c] (27) **to satisfy**, *etc.*, the desolate parts are figured as thirsty, and crying to God for refreshing. (28) **a father**, among men. Has it any human controller, or generator? **drops of dew**,[d] formed in the night.

*The spiritual rain and dew* (*v.* 28).—I. What is this question about? The "rain" and the "dew." The rain is an emblem of the Word, and the dew of the Spirit of God. Hath any mortal man been the origin and cause of the mighty doctrines that are set forth in Scripture concerning the wisdom of God, etc.? "My doctrine shall drop as the rain." II. What is the question itself? Has any mortal man created the one or the other?[e]

*Geological changes in England* (*v.* 25).—An author who has recently written some descriptive papers upon the geology of the London district has called special attention to the singular changes which have passed over what is called the Thames

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quarter, and of its streams together. "The course of the propagation of light, which seems to proceed from a centre, and to spread rapidly in every direction, are perhaps as little known now as they were in the time of Job."—*Barnes.*

"We should render thanks to God for having produced this temporal light, which is the smile of Heaven and joy of the world, spreading it like cloth of gold over the face of the air and earth, and lighting it as a torch, by which we might behold His works."—*Caussin.*

"The best way to see Divine light, is to put out thine own candle!" *Quarles.*

*b A. L. Westwood.*

**the lightning, the rain, and the dew**

*a* "A channel for the heavy rains which descend like a torrent through the riven atmosphere."—*S. k. Com.*

*b* Job xxvii. 26, Zech. x. 1 marg.

*c* Ps. cvii. 35; Is. xliii. 19, 20.

*d* Vulg., Syr., Targ. have "drops." In the original seems rather to signify "revivings," or "bubbles."

Ps. cxlvii. 7, 8.

*e W. Nunn, M.A.*

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"The earthward direction assigned to the water-spouts is likened to an aqueduct coming downwards from the sky."—*Delitzsch.*

*f* See *Sat. Aft. Rambles Round London.*

Valley. This was, as he says, excavated at a period "when the winters of England were of an Arctic severity. In the spring the thaws of the accumulated snows filled the valley with waters of a torrential volume and velocity. Thus the slopes were wasted, and the channel deepened year after year." On the north, for a long distance, the side of the valley has undergone little alteration up to the present time, but on the south a series of alterations, of elevations and depressions, have taken place through the lapse of centuries, so that it is believed by several geologists that the now existing outlet which connects the Thames with the sea was opened up by a grand convulsion; while previous to that, the stream not only ran in a different course, but also spread over many times the breadth it now occupies. A point is indicated at Cliffe, near Gravesend, where a ridge was cut through, and a new channel formed, which now connects the Thames with the North Sea *f*

**the ice and the hoar-frost**

*a* Job xxxvii. 10; Ps. cxlvii. 16.

**29, 30.** (29) **whose womb,** who is the mother of ice and frost?[a] These have no *created* mother: *v.* 28 asks after the one who begets, *v.* 29 after the one who bears.[b] (30) **are hid,**[c] or lie hidden; the appearance of water is lost, the ice looks like stone: they are hid as with a covering of stone. **is frozen,** *lit.* is taken; seized and bound together. The surface of the deep "takes hold of itself," or presses together by forming itself into a solid mass.

*b* "These questions refer not to the analysis of phenomena or of natural laws, but to the inner principles, of wh. science *now* professes to know nothing." — *Spk. Com.*

*c Hid*, connected with root *to curdle*, hence, condense, harden.

*The suggestions of the ice.*—I. God has made nothing in vain. A use for, a purpose in each of His works. So, no doubt, in the ice and hoar-frost. II. There are lands where snow, frost, ice are unknown; where, if we described them, our truth would be doubted. Why should we doubt things that are outside our knowledge or experience? Thus the love of God, and the new birth, may be facts in the experience of some men, though we are not experimentally acquainted with them. A central African would surely believe that there might be ice, etc., on reliable testimony: and have you not reliable testimony to the facts of the spiritual life? An African who travels may have the witness of his own eyesight: and you, by travelling the way of prayer, may have the witness in yourself.

*Hoar-frost* (*v.* 29).—The hoar-frost is generated in a way analogous to the snow; for the latter is vapour frozen aloft, and the former vapour frozen near the surface of the earth. Bodies have a tendency to throw off their heat, so that it is sometimes cooler in their immediate vicinity than at a short distance from them. This occasions a deposition of moisture upon their surface from the surrounding atmosphere, independently of the mists that float in it. The natural tendency of bodies to cool themselves might seem, at first sight, to be a defect, since warmth is so necessary for the health of plants. But observation teaches us that there has been no mistake, for they often get a covering of hoar-frost by it which protects them from cold. Thus God displays His wisdom and benevolence in spreading over the vegetable creation a beautiful mantle, serving both for protection and beauty.[d]

"When storms lower, and wintry winds oppress thee, Nature, dear goddess, is beautiful, always beautiful! Every little flake of snow is such a perfect crystal, and they fall together so gracefully, as if fairies of the air caught waterdrops and made them into artificial flowers to garland the wings of the wind." — *Mrs. L. M. Child.*

*d The Visitor.*

**Pleiades**

*a* "Canst thou not arrange together the rosette (chain) of

**31. canst,** *etc.*, Delitzsch renders, "Canst thou join the twistings of the Pleiades?"[a] **sweet influences,** lit. *fastenings:* may be the "girdle of the Pleiades," as this group of stars has been poetically likened to a girdle. **Pleiades,** lit. *cimah*, a cluster;

or seven stars[a] so closely set together as to seem bound in sisterly union. **Orion**, or the giant. It is the pioneer of winter, as the Pleiades are of spring. The bands are the restraints by which winter is kept from breaking away too soon.[c]

*The Pleiades, or delightful influences of springtide.*—These seven stars are associated with the return of spring. The appeal therefore of the Almighty to Job means this: "Canst thou prevent the delightful influences of spring falling on the earth?" The influences of spring are delightful in many ways. I. As temporal ministries. 1. Supplies of food; 2. Pleasures to the senses; 3. Exhilarates the spirit. II. As Divine manifestations, spring reveals—1. The profusion of His vital energy; 2. The wonderful tastefulness of God; 3. The calm ease with which He works; 4. The regularity of His procedure. III. As instructive emblems. 1. Spring is an emblem of human life; 2. Of spiritual renovation; 3. Of the general resurrection.[d]

*The influences of Pleiades.*—In these words there lies hidden a fundamental physical truth which has been concealed from mankind for thousands of years, and has only been brought to light in quite recent times. By the Greeks this cluster of stars was called Pleiades from *pleein*, to sail, because it indicated the time when the sailor might hope to undertake a voyage in safety; it was also called Vergiliæ, from *ver*, the spring, because it ushered in the mild vernal weather favourable for farming and pastoral employments. Job therefore would understand the question as meaning "Canst thou hinder or retard the spring?" The discovery of modern science has laid open the true depth of the Divine question. The Chaldean word translated in the Authorised Version Pleiades is *cimah*, meaning literally a hinge, pivot, or axle which turns round and moves other bodies with it. The attention of astronomers had for years been directed to the question of the sun's stationary or movable condition, and it is now received as an ascertained truth that the sun has itself a central point around which it with its system revolves. This central point has been ascertained by M. Mädler, of Dorpat, after many intricate calculations and laborious observations, to be Alcyone, the brightest star of the Pleiades group, and that it is the centre or axle of our solar system. So great is the force exerted by this star that though at a distance thirty-four millions of times greater than that from our earth to the sun, it draws our system round it at the rate of 422,000 miles a day in an orbit which it will take many thousands of years to complete.

**32, 33.** (32) **Mazzaroth**,[a] some think this refers to the twelve constellations, or signs of the Zodiac: others prefer to connect it with one star of peculiar brightness, such as Jupiter or Venus. **Arcturus**, constellation called Ursa Major, the Great Bear[b] (ch. ix. 9). **his sons**, the three stars in the tail of Arcturus. (33) **ordinances**, which regulate the change of the seasons.[c] **thou . . dominion**, can man control the heavenly influences?

*The ordinances of Heaven.*—I. The place whence they are promulgated. Suggestive of power, holiness, righteousness, wisdom, mercy, love. II. The sphere of their operation. The earth. III. Their superiority to, and independence of, all human control: "canst thou set," etc. IV. Their various effects. Day and night, the seasons, etc.

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diasm 'ds of the Pleiades?'—*Hengel.*

*b* Am. v. 8.

*c* "Orion and the Pleiades are visible in the Syrian sky longer in the year than with us, and there they come about 17° higher above the horizon than with us."—*Delitzsch.*

*d* *Dr. Thomas.*

"Canst thou tie the Pleiades in a knot?"—*Wordsworth.*

"The Greenlanders call the Pleiades *Attuturset* a name given to them because they appear to be bound together."—*Barnes.*

*cr.* 31—33. *J. B. S. Carvalho, Lamp. Lec.* 87.

"Stately spring! whose tolse folds are valleys, whose breast-tonquet is gardens, and whose bush is a vernal evening."—*Richter.*

**the ordinances of heaven**

*a* *Delitzsch* explains as "lodging-houses, or strongholds." In wh. one after another the sun lodges as it describes the circle of the year.

*b* "The great and less Bear are called by the Arabs 'Daughters of

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the Bier,' the quadrangle being the *bier*, the three others the mourners."—*Fausset.*

c Ge. viii. 22.

*Dillmann* connects with the root *zahar*, to be bright, and refers to a star of peculiar brightness.

"The innumerable stars shining in order, like a living hymn written in light."—*Willis.*

d *J. C. Sharpe.*

**man cannot command the rain, or rule the lightning**

a Je. xiv. 23; Zec. x. 1; Ja. v. 18.

b Comp. Is. vi. 8; Matt. viii. 9.

c *Dr. W. A. Scott*

v. 34. "This probably refers to thunder, and its effects in producing rain. It is said, 'Why, fellow, are you making such a noise? Are you going to shake the clouds? Is it rain you are going to produce?' 'What is all this noise about? Is it rain you want?' 'Cease, cease your roaring; the rain will not come.' 'Listen to that elephant, rain is coming.'"—*Roberts.*

d *Chambers' Ency.*

**who is the**

*The stars are ancient teachers.—*

The stars above.
Those ancient teachers with their looks of love;
The selfsame stars, that o'er man's troubled years
So long have shone from their eternal spheres:
Ages beneath have perished—they abide,
And night by night their stillness seems to chide
This changeful life—the ceaseless ebb and flow,
The weary turmoil of the world below;
Yea, these enduring heavens and this green earth,
That, day by day, since young creation's birth,
With all their loving language never cease
To plead with man and call him back to peace,
Oh, teach they not that wars and tempests lie
Encompassed with a dread tranquillity?
That man's unquiet years of storm and strife
Are but as moments in the deeper life
Of the eternal silence, on whose breast
All earthly discord sinks in perfect rest?[d]

**34, 35.** (34) **thy voice,** commanding the clouds to send down rain.[a] (35) **send lightnings,** controlling them as if they were thy servants. **and say,** will the lightnings wait on thee, and say, Here we are?[b]

*Two worlds united by the Atlantic cable* (*v.* 35).—I. The first thought this subject suggests is, that we should give thanks to God for the success that crowned the labours of our fellow-men engaged in this work. II. I am aware, however, that our Lord tells us of some who strain at a gnat and swallow a camel: and that their lineal descendants, having swallowed the camel, expend their remaining strength in deciding what is authority between trifles, or as to mint and cummin. With such people there is no progress. III. I look upon this achievement as a most happy illustration of the power of mind over mind, and of mind over matter. IV. As one that will have a great moral result. V. The termini of the telegraph are every shop, counting-room, and fireside on both continents. VI. The text is connected with a time of trouble, such as there never was since there was a nation; and yet, at that time, the prophet says, Jehovah shall deliver His people. VII. There is something our *sarants* are not able to explain in the working of the electric current.[c]

*Lightning.*—According to Arago there are three kinds of lightning. 1. Forked lightning, which appears in a broken line of dense, thin light, well defined at the edges; 2. Sheet lightning, which has no definite form, but seems to be a great mass of light; 3. Ball lightning. It is said to occur in this way after a violent explosion of lightning: a ball is seen to proceed from the region of the explosion, and to make its way to the earth in a curved line, like a bomb. When it reaches the ground it either splits up at once and disappears, or it rebounds like an elastic ball several times before doing so. It is described as being very dangerous, readily setting fire to the building on which it alights, and a lightning-conductor is no protection against it. Ball lightning lasts for several seconds, and in this respect differs very widely from the lightning of the first and second classes, which are in the strictest sense momentary.[d]

**36—38.** (36) **inward parts,** lit. *the kidneys,* "which in Heb.

physiology are regarded as the seat of instinctive yearnings."[a] Some, however, suppose this word to mean *clouds*;[b] others *heavenly phenomena*, such as lightnings and thunders.[c] **heart**, insight, intuitive faculty; perception;[d] or, in harmony with the previous clause, celestial phenomena. (37) **number the clouds**, wh are so broken up, and in so many layers. **stay . . heaven**, cause to lie down; turn over so as to empty them like water-skins.[e] **bottles**, or rain-filled clouds. (38) **dust**, *etc.*, is turned into mire; **or is molten into a mass.** Effect of rain on loose dust.

*Wisdom the gift of God.*—I. If this is true of the lower, how much more of the higher kind of wisdom? (Ja. i. 5, iii. 15.) II. The lower wisdom distinguishes man from the brute creation; the higher marks the difference between the worldly and the Christian man. Do you possess it?

*Reason is never opposed to itself.*—It seems to me that there are some things that reason by its own light cannot discover; and others that when proposed it cannot comprehend. . . . Of the first, there are divers truths in the Christian religion that reason, left to itself, would never have been able to find out, nor perhaps to have so much as dreamed of. . . . Of the second, there are truths delivered by revelation, that not only would never have been found out by mere natural reason, but they are so abstruse that when they are proposed as clearly as proper and unambiguous expressions can propose them in, they do nevertheless surpass our dim and bounded reason, on one or other of those three accounts that are mentioned in a dialogue about things transcending reason—namely, either as not clearly conceivable by our understanding, such as the infiniteness and perfections of the Divine nature; or as inexplicable by us, such as the manner how God can create a soul, or how this, being an immaterial substance, can act upon a human body and be acted on by it; or as unsymmetrical or unsociable—that is, such as we see not how to reconcile with other things, which are manifestly true, or are by us acknowledged to be true: such are the Divine prescience of future contingents, and the liberty that belongs to a man's will, at least in divers cases.[f]

**39–41.** (39) **thou hunt**, *etc.*, the instincts of animals are as far beyond human control as the forces of nature.[a] **lion**, or lioness, in search of prey for her whelps. (40) **abide**, etc., *lurk*, the attitude of the lion in its lair.[b] (41) **raven**, a carnivorous bird; bird of ill omen, which men dislike, but for which God cares. Throughout this chapter Job is made to feel that there is even greater mystery *around him* than the mystery of God's dealing *with him*.

*God's tender care for the lower creation.*—I. How much more will He care for man? II. How much more for His children? (Matt. vi. 26.) III. Does not this Divine example teach us to have a proper regard for dumb creatures? IV. He provides for the ravens through the instrumentality of instinct, and for man by use of reason. V. The raven's instinct teaches it where to find its food; and our reason should guide us to the house of God, and the throne of grace, for the nourishment of our higher life.

*Francke's school at Halle* (*v.* 41).—The conduct of the eminent and justly celebrated Francke, in the establishment of the

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**giver of wisdom, etc.?**

*a* Syd. Com.

*b* Eichhorn. Umbreit, Wemyss.

*c* Schultens, Ewald, Lee, etc.

*Umbreit* trans. "Who hath put wisdom in the dark clouds, and given understanding to the meteor."

*d* Ec. ii. 26; Is. xxviii. 26.

*e* "The clouds are called the 'urns,' or water-skins of heaven, in several passages of Arabian poets; and by the utres, bladders, or water-skins, are always meant the more bulky clouds."—*Schultens.*

*f* Boyle.

**who is the guardian of animated nature?**

*a* Ps. civ. 21.

*b* Ps. x. 9, 10, xvii. 12.

*c.* 39. "To a man who is boasting of the speed of his foot or his prowess, it is said, 'Yes, there is no doubt that you will hunt the prey for the tiger.'

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When a person does a favour for a cruel man it is asked, 'What! give food to the tiger?' 'O yes; give milk to the serpent.' 'Here comes the sportsman; he has been hunting prey for the tiger.'"—*Roberts.*

"Do good by stealth, and blush to find it fame."—*Pope.*

hospital and school for the poor, at Halle, near Glaucha, in Saxony, is well known. Having no permanent funds to meet the expenses, it may be easily supposed that the good man would frequently be reduced to great difficulties; at such times the interpositions of the providence of God were truly remarkable. About Easter, 1696, he knew not where to obtain money for the expenses of the ensuing week: but when their food was reduced to the very last morsel, one thousand crowns were contributed by some entirely unknown person. At another time all their provisions were exhausted, and the good minister wisely presented his request to the God of mercy, who careth even for the ravens when they cry. When prayer was over, just as he was taking his seat, a friend from a distance arrived with fifty crowns, which was shortly followed by twenty more. At another period, the workmen wanted thirty crowns, when he remarked that he had no money, but that he trusted in God; scarcely had he uttered the sentence, when, in this moment of necessity, the precise sum arrived.

## *CHAPTER THE THIRTY-NINTH.*

**who determines the increase of animals?**

**1—4.** (1) **knowest thou,** not merely dost thou observe,[a] but dost thou apprehend the final causes? **wild goats,** *lit.* rock-climbers; the ibex, or mountain-goat.[b] **hinds,** fawns: most timid and defenceless animals. **calve?** Ps. xxix. 9. (2) **canst . . forth?** are all the mysteries of breeding within man's control? (3) **bow themselves,** in the pain of giving birth to their young. A time of exceeding peril, in wh. God preserves them. **sorrows,** "infants are called 'pangs' by the Arab poets." (4) **good liking,** well-conditioned, though no *man* cares for them. **with corn,** should be, *in the wilderness,* apart from their parents.[c]

*One mark of difference between man and the brute.*—I. The animals young leave their parents, and commence an independent life; with man there is the blessedness of the family tie, of natural affection, and sympathy. II. This fact points to the moral, in one particular, of the Saviour's question—"How much is a man better than a sheep?" III. It teaches us to guard the family and the home as sacred institutions; and admonishes children that fostering a spirit of proud independence reduces them, in one respect, to the level of the animal creation.

"*When the hinds do calve.*"—It is obvious that Jehovah could not refer to the mere speculative knowledge of these facts, but to that which is proper to Himself, by which He not only knows, but also directs and governs all things. This is confirmed by the use of the verb *shamar*, which signifies to observe, to keep, or to guard. Knowest thou the time when the wild goats bring forth, the parturition of the hinds dost thou guard? Without the protecting care of God, who upholds all His works by the word of His power, the whole race of these timid creatures would soon be destroyed by the violence of wild beasts, or the arts of the hunter. It is with great propriety, says one of the ancients, that Jehovah demands, "The birth of the hinds dost Thou guard?" for, since this animal is always in flight, and with fear and terror always leaping and skipping about, she could never

*a* "Observation of nature is a special characteristic of Heb. poetry and thought."—*Dillmann.*

*b* "It inhabits exclusively the more rocky and desolate parts of the country."—*Tristram.*

1 Sa. xxiv. 2; Ps. civ. 18.

*c* "The young forsake their dams very early."—*Spk. Com.*

4. *Liking:* the Anglo-Saxon *lician,* to "please," gave rise to the impersonal "it likes me," "an it likes your majority," and the idea of "pleasing" is no doubt an ingredient in the noun.

bring her young to maturity without such a special protection. The providence of God, therefore, is equally conspicuous in the preservation of the mother and the fawn: both are the objects of His compassion and tender care; and, consequently, that afflicted man had no reason to charge his Maker with unkindness, who condescends to watch over the goats and the hinds.[d]

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*d Paxton.*

**5—8.** (5) **wild ass,**[a] two Heb. words are used for this animal —*ferâ*, the swift-footed; and *arôd*, the shy, or untamable. Both names are employed in the verse. Its speed is beyond that of the fastest horse. (6) **barren land,** or the salt wastes, incapable of culture.[b] (7) **scorneth,** so will not come near. **driver,** "the Arab driver of a long line of camels, or other animals." He is altogether beyond restraint. (8) **range,** or searching; the region he freely finds for himself. It especially loves desolate hills as its abode.

*The wild ass.*—Every natural historian has recorded the extreme wildness of this animal. He is so jealous of his liberty that on the slightest alarm or the first appearance of danger he flies with amazing swiftness into the desert. His senses are so acute that it is impossible to approach him in the open country. But, in spite of all his vigilance, the hunter often encloses him in his toils, and leads him away into captivity. Even in this unhappy state he never submits his neck to the yoke of man without a determined resistance. "Sent out free" by Him that made him, he is tenacious of his independence, and opposes, to the extraordinary methods which his captors are forced to employ, the most savage obstinacy; and for the most part, he baffles all their endeavours to tame him; still he "scorneth the multitude of the city, neither regards he the crying of the driver." On the authority of this text Chrysostom says, "This animal is strong and untamable; man can never subdue him, whatever efforts he may make for that purpose." But Varro affirms, on the contrary, that "the wild ass is fit for labour; that he is easily tamed: and that when he is once tamed he never resumes his original wildness."[d] —*The ass.*—The ass is not less remarkable for his power to sustain, than for his patience and tranquillity when oppressed by an unequal load. Like the camel, he quietly submits to the heaviest burden; he bears it peaceably, till he can proceed no farther; and when his strength fails him, instead of resisting or endeavouring to throw off the oppressive weight, he contentedly lies down, and rests himself under it, recruits his vigour with the provender that may be offered him, and then, at the call of his master, proceeds on his journey. To this trait in the character of that useful animal, the dying patriarch evidently refers, when, under the afflatus of inspiration, he predicts the future lot and conduct of Issachar and his descendants. "Issachar is a strong ass, couching down between two burdens. And he saw that rest was good, and the land that it was pleasant, and bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant unto tribute." This tribe, naturally dull and stupid, should, like the creature by which they were characterised, readily submit to the vilest master and the meanest service. Although, like the ass, possessed of ability, if properly exerted and rightly directed, to shake off the inglorious yoke of servitude, they would basely submit to the insults of the Phœnicians on the one hand, and the Samaritans on the other.

**the wild ass**

*a* "It is a dirty yellow with a white belly, single-hoofed and long-eared; its horrible head somewhat resembles that of the gazelle, but is much larger; its hair has the dryness of the hair of the deer, and the animal forms a transition from the stag and deer genus to the ass. It is entirely distinct from the *mahi*, or wild ox, whose large soft eyes are so much celebrated by the poets of the steppe." —*Wetzstein.*

*b* "The wild ass gladly licks the salt or natron of the desert; all wild animals that feed on plants have a partiality, wh. is based on chemical laws of life, for licking salt." —*Delitzsch.*

*d Paxton.*

In the time of Henry VIII. it was usual, when speaking of St. Asaphus, to abbreviate it into St. Asa. Standish, the bishop, having irritated Erasmus by an idle sarcasm, the latter retaliated by sometimes calling him Episcopus a Sancto Asino.

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**the unicorn**

*a* "The word *unicorn* ought to be expunged fr. our version in all places where it occurs. (Nu. xxiii. 22, xxiv. 8; De. xxiii. 17; Is. xxxiv. 7)." — *Wordsworth.*

After discussing the claims of the oryx, buffalo, rhinoceros, and supposed unicorn, the *Bib. Dict.* decides in favour of a gigantic species of *urus*, or wild ox. "'Beyond all doubt the Reëm is the *Urus* of Cæsar, *i.e.* the Auerochs.'" — *Tristram.*

*b* A. S. *crybb*, O. H. Ger. *crippa*, the manger or rack of a stall—a stall for cattle.

*c Topics for Teachers.*

"God is a worker: He has thickly strewn infinity with grandeur. God is love: He shall wipe away creation's tears, and all the worlds shall summer in His smile." — *Smith.*

"Nature—the living visible garment of God." —*Goethe.*

*d Milton.*

**the peacock and the ostrich**

*a Revised Eng. Bible.*

*b* "She makes a

**9—12.** (9) **unicorn,** Heb. *reëm*, or *rēim ;* not an animal with one horn,[a] but a wild species of ox. Some identify with the oryx, a well-known species of gazelle. **thy crib,**[b] as the domestic oxen will. (10) **bind,** so that he will work at ploughing and harrowing the fields. (11) **trust him,** as you do the horse or ox : trust him to work steadily. **strength is great,** and so would be very useful to you if you could only tame it. **thy labour,** or the results of thy labour, *i.e.* thy harvest. (12) **believe him,** see *trust* of, *v.* 11.

*The unicorn.*—The Heb. *reëm* occurs seven times. It is the name of some large animal unhappily rendered unicorn by the A.V. following the LXX. In Deu. xxxiii. 17, "Horns of a unicorn" should be "horns of unicorns." Two tribes sprang from one Joseph, as two horns from one head. Probably the unicorn is not the rhinoceros, but some species of wild ox—this is the view of Schultens. Robinson has little doubt that the *reëm* is the buffalo. This description is confirmed by various passages. 1. Strength, Nu. xxiii. 22 ; 2. Fierceness, Ps. xxii. 21 ; 3. Two horns, Deu. xxxiii. 17 ; 4. Intractability, Job xxxix. 9—11 ; 5. Activity and playfulness of young, Ps. xxix. 6. See also Isa. xxxiv. 6, 7, where Jehovah is said to be preparing a sacrifice in Bozrah. It is added, "The *rcëm* shall come down, and the bullocks with the bulls." This evidently refers exclusively to the animals of the bovine species, which were used for sacrifice (see articles in *Smith's Biblical Dict.*, on "Unicorn;" and in *Kitto's Biblical Ency.*, on "Reëm").[c]

*Creation of beasts.*— God said,

"Let the earth bring forth soul living in her kind,
Cattle and creeping things, and beast of the earth,
Each in their kind." The earth obey'd, and straight
Op'ning her fertile womb, teem'd at a birth.
Innum'rous living creatures, perfect forms,
Limb'd and full-grown : out of the ground uprose,
As from his lair, the wild beast where he wons
In forest wild, in thicket, brake, or den.
Among the trees in pairs they rose, they walk'd ;
The cattle in the fields and meadows green ;
Those rare and solitary, these in flocks,
Past'ring at once, and in broad herds up-sprung.
The grassy clods now calved, now half appear'd
The tawny lion, pawing to get free
His hinder parts ; then springs, as broke from bonds,
And rampant shakes his brinded mane : the ounce,
The libbard, and the tiger, as the mole
Rising, the crumbled earth above them threw
In hillocks : the swift stag from under ground
Bore up his branching head : scarce from his mould
Behemoth, biggest born of earth, upheaved
His vastness ; fleeced the flocks, and bleating rose ;
As plants ambiguous between sea and land,
The river-horse, and scaly crocodile.[d]

**13—15.** (13) **peacocks,** this *v.* requires retranslation. "The wing of the ostrich exulteth, but is it with *fond* pinion and plumage?"[a] Reference is to the singular maternal habit of the ostrich, as detailed in the next verse.[b] **ostrich,** Heb. *chasidah*, pious. Some think with a play on the word wh. is used for the

stork, as remarkable for its natural affection. (14) **leaveth**, *etc.*,[c] it is the natural habit of the ostrich to make its nest in the sand, with layers of eggs, about thirty: these the sun's rays aid in their incubation. (15) **foot**, of passing rider. **wild beast**, such as the jackal.

"*Fine feathers make fine birds;*" but "*handsome is that handsome does.*"—Outline of S.S. address. I. A brace of birds. 1. The peacock, very beautiful. Descr.: spread tail, strut, etc.; voice harsh, discordant. Keepers of peacock sometimes indicted for nuisance: 2. Ostrich, voice often mistaken for that of lion—speed and strength prodigious; but folly great, and void of natural affection. II. A couple of lessons. 1. Beauty without modesty repels rather than attracts; 2. Strength without tenderness excites alarm rather than sympathy. Learn:—Mere physical beauty and strength are things that wear out, spiritual beauty and strength last for ever.

*The peacock as an emblem of vanity.*—

> The self-applauding bird the peacock see—
> Mark what a sumptuous Pharisee is he!
> Meridian sunbeams tempt him to unfold
> His radiant glories, azure, green, and gold;
> He treads as if, some solemn music near,
> His measured step were governed by his ear;
> And seems to say, "Ye meaner fowl, give place,
> I am all splendour, dignity, and grace!"[d]

*The ostrich.*—The ostrich, too, has goodly feathers, and is yet a foolish bird; for wisdom does not always go along with beauty and gaiety. Other birds do not envy the peacock or the ostrich their gaudy colours, nor complain for want of them; why, then, should we repine, if we see others wearing better clothes than we can afford to wear? God bestows His gifts variously, and those gifts are not always the most valuable that make the finest show. Who would not rather have the voice of the nightingale than the tail of the peacock? the eye of the eagle, and her soaring wing, and the natural affection of the stork, than the beautiful wings and feathers of the ostrich, that can never rise above the earth, and is without natural affection?[e]

**16—18.** (16) **hardened**, *etc.*, for at a slight disturbance she will quite forsake her nest; and it seems that she also lays some eggs on which she never sits.[a] **without fear**, proper maternal anxiety for her offspring. (17) **God**, *etc.*,[b] i.e. here is a mystery, like yours, Job, of which you can only say, God has done it. For it however there is wise good reason. (18) **lifteth up herself**, by the aid of her pinions skimming swiftly along. **scorneth**, *etc.*, distancing the very swiftest rider.

*The ostrich.*—The natural science of the Book of Job has been criticised, because in the reply of the Lord to Job we are told of the ostrich that she "leaveth her eggs in the earth, and warmeth them in dust, and forgetteth that the foot may crush them, or that the wild beast may break them;" "she is hardened against her young ones, as though they were not hers."—whereas it has long been familiarly known that, though the eggs of the ostrich are, at least in the hotter regions, left buried in the sand during the day, where the heat of the sun retained in the sand is sufficient to continue the process of incubation, yet that at night the ostrich does incubate, and will, on occasion, vigorously

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great display of her flaunting plumage, but does she use her wings for purposes of natural affection for her offspring?"—*Wordsworth.*

c "Leaving does not here mean forsaking. The female incubates alone by day, but at night she is joined by the male."—*Spk. Com.*

The word rendered peacock, means "a wild tremulous cry," and denotes the female ostrich.

"Beauty is such a fleeting blossom, how can wisdom rely upon its momentary delight?"—*Seneca.*

"Loveliness needs not the foreign aid of ornament; but is, when unadorned adorned the most."—*Thomson.*

d *Cowper.*

e *M. Henry.*

**the ostrich**

a La. lv. 3.

b The Arab proverb is, "Foolish as an ostrich."

"The poor wren, the most diminutive of birds, will fight for her young ones in her nest against the owl."—*Shakespeare.*

"Our sweetest experiences of affection are meant to be the germs of that realm which is the home of the heart."—*Bushnell.*

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Hang the sweetest grass around a pig's neck, it will still go and wallow in its native mire.

*c Dr. Tristram.*

defend its young. But it has only recently been ascertained that the ostrich has this peculiarity in common with the other struthious or wingless birds of South America and Australia, as the rhea, emu, and cassowary, that it is only the male parent which performs domestic duties; that the female, so soon as she has deposited her eggs, does neglect and utterly ignore her offspring. Here, then, we find the language of the oldest book in the world in strict accordance with a fact of natural history which remained till yesterday unknown.[c]

**the war-horse**

*a* "This passage is at once the most ancient and the most beautiful description of the noblest of quadrupeds." —*Delitzsch.*

*b* "The point wh. struck those who saw for the first time the mighty war-horse in battle must have been the terror of the neck with its quivering muscles and tossing mane, and the word here used denotes, most probably, that impression." —*Spk. Com.*

*c* Jer. viii. 16.

*d Kitto* (see next illus.).

**19, 20.** (19) **horse,** first Bib. reference, Ge. xlvii. 17. It should be understood here that the reference is to the war-horse, under all the excitement of approaching battle. At the time of Job the horse was probably used for war rather than for domestic purposes.[a] **thunder,** the quivering, shaking mane is likened to the quivering sound of thunder.[b] (20) **afraid,** Heb. *raash*, meaning rapid motion or rushing: referring to the terrible rush of the moment of charging: spring as a locust. **grasshopper,** should be locust. **nostrils,** whence comes the terrible *snorting*.[c]

*The Arabian war-horse.*—Here we arrive at one of the most glorious descriptions in the Book of Job—a description which no translation has been able to disfigure, and which in all translations has been admired. It is unnecessary to explain the figures employed, the force and beauty of which will be felt by every reader. There is a well-known description of the horse in Virgil, which is unquestionably the finest in classical antiquity. It is exceedingly noble, but is not comparable to that which the sacred text offers. The following is Sotheby's translation:—

> "But at the clash of arms, his ear afar
> Drinks the deep sound and vibrates to the war:
> Flames from each nostril roll in gathered stream;
> His quivering limbs with restless motion gleam;
> O'er his right shoulder, floating full and fair,
> Sweeps his thick mane and spreads his pomp of hair:
> Swift works his double spine; and earth around
> Rings to the solid hoof that wears the ground."[d]

**the war-horse**

*a* "The rattling of the quiver was caused by the fact that the arrows were thrown somewhat loosely into the case, or the quiver, and that in the rapid motion of the warrior they were shaken against each other."—*Barnes.*

*b* Pr. xxi. 31; Je. viii. 6.

**21—23.** (21) **paweth,** *lit.* they dig. Reference is to the restless movement of the restrained horse. **valley,** or plain, which alone is suitable for the evolutions of cavalry or chariots. **armed men,** heavy armed infantry. (22) **at fear,** that which one would expect to affright him. (23) **quiver,** *etc.*, the arms or weapons of its rider may be referred to,[a] or more prob. the quiver is put for the arrows of the enemy that fly all about it; yet it dashes on right against the glittering spear and the shield.[b]

*The Arab war-horse (continued).*—To this we will add a few descriptive touches from Antar. which will be particularly appropriate, because the Book of Job conducts us to Arabia or its vicinity, and because the Arabians do so passionately admire this noble animal that they have exhausted all the wealth of their fine language and rich imaginations in descriptions of its beauty, spirit, and pride. The mare of Shedad, called Jirwet, is thus mentioned:—"Shedad's mare was called Jirwet, whose like was unknown. Kings negotiated with him for her, but he would not part with her, and would accept no offer or bribe for her; and thus he used to talk of her in his verses: 'Seek not to purchase my horse, for Jirwet is not to be bought or borrowed. I am a

strong castle on her back; and in her bound are glory and greatness. I would not part with her were strings of camels to come to me, with their drivers following them. She flies with the wind without wings, and tears up the waste and the desert. I will keep her for the day of calamities, and she will rescue me when the battle-dust rises.'"[c]

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the foolish." — *Carlyle.*

c *Kitto* (see last illus.).

24. 25. (24) **swalloweth,** *etc.*, so rapid is his motion it is as if the ground were swallowed. A common Arabic figure. **believeth he,** in his impatience he can hardly believe that the trumpet sounds the charge. (25) **ha, ha,** imitation of his neighing response to the trumpets. **smelleth,** snuffeth, discerneth. **thunder,** thundering voice of command

*The war-horse.*—We read in the Book of Job a good deal concerning horses, and surely no better or more faithful description can we find anywhere than that given in this chapter. Whether in or out of battle, the horse loves not only the sound of the trumpet, but also the quivering of the sword and spear, and all the martial accoutrements. A circumstance of not uncommon occurrence was witnessed by the writer. A cavalry regiment was going through its manœuvres, when a soldier in the foremost ranks was thrown. The troops seemed to pass over him; but as the dust cleared off he was discovered unhurt. Where was his horse? In its place, at the head of the regiment, going through all the manœuvres, answering to the trumpet and the "thunder of the captains." It was a curious sight to see this sensible animal as he trotted, galloped and charged—all in time and place.

**the war-horse**

"I will not change my horse with any that treads on four pasterns. When I bestride him I soar, I am a hawk; he trots the air; the earth sings when he touches it."—*Shakespeare.*

"Stroke thou threatenest, he, in high and boastful neighs, piercing the night's dull ear."—*Ibid.*

*Nature—her soothing influence.*

When the ills of life
Had chafed my spirit, when the unsteady pulse
Beat with strange flutterings, I would wander forth
And seek the woods. The sunshine on my path
Was to me as a friend. The swelling hills,
Or quiet dells retiring far between,
With gentle invitation to explore
Their windings, were a calm society
That talk'd with me, and soothed me. Then the chant
Of birds, and chime of brooks, and soft caress
Of the fresh sylvan air, made me forget
The thoughts that broke my peace.[a]

"Nature is the essential properties of a thing, or that by which it is distinguished from all others. It is used, also, for the system of the world, and the Creator of it; the aggregate powers of the human body and common sense (Rom. i. 26, 27; 1 Cor. xi. 14). The word is also used in reference to a variety of other objects."—*C. Buck.*

a *Bryant.*

26, 27. (26) **hawk,**[a] a migratory bird of prey. **fly,** rapid flying characterises the whole hawk *genus.*[b] **south,** as to warmer clime. Moved by an instinct wholly unconnected with human wants. (27) **mount up,** high flying is the characteristic of the eagle.[c] **nest on high,** on some inaccessible piece of rock.

**the hawk and the eagle**

*A hint from the birds.*—I. Consider the wonderful fact that they migrate annually. This is not by thy wisdom: *i.e.* reason akin to human; but by instinct. As surely as there is the instinct compelling the southern flight, so surely there is the southern land. II. Consider what that fact teaches. Hope, like a Divine and irrepressible instinct, urges us to seek a far-off clime. Does not hope point as unerringly to another world as the birds' instinct to a warmer clime?

*The hawk stretching her wings towards the south.*—It is probable that these words refer not to the renovation of the plumage, but

a "Heb. *nets*; prob. a generic term, including the various species of the falcon or hawk tribe, as the jer falcon, the gos-hawk, the sparrow-hawk, the lanner, the sacre, the bubby, the kestril, and the merlin."—*Barnes.*

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to the long and persevering flight of the hawk towards the south on the approach of winter. Her migration is not conducted by the wisdom and prudence of man, but by the superintending and upholding providence of the only wise God. The words of Jehovah cannot be understood as referring to the falconer's art; for we have no evidence that the hawk was employed in hunting till many ages after the times in which the patriarchs flourished. Besides, if the Divine challenge referred to that amusement, the direction of her flight could not be confined to the south; for she pursues the game to every quarter of heaven. The renowned Chrysostom, on this passage, inquires why Jehovah has made no mention of sheep and oxen and other animals of the same kind, but only of useless creatures, which seem to have been formed for no beneficial or important purposes. But is it to be supposed that God, who is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working, has made any part of His works in vain? We may not be able to discover, after the most careful investigation, the end which the Almighty had in view when He created some of His works; but shall we presume on this account to pronounce them useless or insignificant? So far from being a useless bird, the hawk, in some cases, brings the most important and effectual assistance to the hunter. It has already been observed that the antelope, which seems rather to fly than to run, leaves the swiftest dog far behind, and could never be overtaken without the help of the falcon. The hawk, then, is not the useless and insignificant creature which the Greek father represents her; on the contrary, she has conferred benefits on mankind of no inconsiderable value.[d]

**the eagle's flight**

**28–30.** (28) **abideth,** term carries the idea of securely, safely (Ps. xci. 1). **crag,** Heb. *shen*, tooth.[a] **strong place,** kind of citadel or fastness. (29) **seeketh,** looks out for. **afar off,** the eagle discerns its prey by sight rather than by smell. (30) **blood,** brought to the eyries by the mothers. **slain,** *etc.*, man's battle-fields provide the eagle's prey.[b]

*The flight of the hawk.*—The hawk is distinguished by the swiftness of her flight, and the rapid motion of her wings in flying. But as it is the first of these which naturally fixes the attention of an observer, the Hebrews, according to their invariable custom, selected it as the reason of the name by which she is known in their language; they call her *nets*, from the verb *natsa*, to fly. She was reckoned by many of the ancients the swiftest of the feathered race. In Homer, the descent of Apollo from heaven is compared to her flight: "From the mountains of Ida he descended like a swift hawk, the destroyer of pigeons, that is the swiftest of birds." In the thirteenth book, Ajax tells Hector the day should come when he would wish to have horses swifter than hawks to carry him back to the city. Among the Egyptians the hawk was a symbol of the winds: a sure proof that they contemplated with great admiration the rapidity of her motions. For the same reason, according to some writers, she was consecrated to the sun, which she resembles in the surprising swiftness of her career, and the facility with which she moves through the boundless regions of the sky. This custom of consecrating the hawk to Apollo, the Greeks borrowed from the Egyptians, among whom no animal was so sacred as the ibis and the hawk. Her daring spirit, her thirst of blood, the surprising

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b "A falcon wh. belonged to Henry IV. of France, having escaped from Fontainebleau, was found 24 hours after in Malta, the space traversed being not less than 1,350 miles, being a velocity of about 57 miles an hour, on the supposition that the bird was on the wing the whole time." —*Barnes.*

c "Of all animals, the eagle flies highest; and from thence the ancients have given him the epithet of the 'bird of heaven.'" — *Goldsmith.*

d *Paxton.*

a 1 Sam. xiv. 4.

b "Thus does God work exceeding strangely, but wondrously, apparently by contradictions, but in truth most harmoniously and wisely, in the natural world."—*Delitzsch.*

"Two points are kept before Job, the infinite wisdom of God, showed in the importation of instincts infinitely varied and marvellously satisfied, and the impossibility of discovering the regulating or central principle."—*Spk. Com.*

Matt. xxiv. 28; Lu. xvii. 37.

rapidity of her flight, and her perseverance in the chase, soon pointed her out to the hunter as a valuable assistant; but even he willingly resigns her carcase to be meat to the beasts of the field.[c]

B.C. *cir.* 1520.

*c Parkhurst.*

## *CHAPTER THE FORTIETH.*

**1, 2.** (1) **moreover,** this expression introduces the point or application of the speech. **the Lord,** Heb. *Jehovah.* (2) **contendeth,**[a] as Job had desired to do. Job is called *the reprover;* he who thought to reprove God. **answer it,** *viz.*, the many questions asked concerning the inexplicable arrangements of Div. providence in nature. "God's ways are not man's ways, nor within his competence to judge."

*The sin and folly of contending with God.*—I. The special character here indicated: "He that contendeth with God." 1. Complaining against Providence; 2. Arraigning the Divine wisdom in creation; 3. Resisting the Divine government; 4. Rejecting the offers of Divine grace. II. The twofold question proposed to such. 1. Can he show the Almighty a more excellent way? 2. Can he answer the questions that God proposes to his heart, conscience, understanding?—*The sin of reproving God.*—As it may be thought that there are none at this day so presumptous as to "reprove God," I will inquire—I. Who they are that are obnoxious to this charge. Impious as such conduct is, there are multitudes who are guilty of it. 1. Those who dispute His word; 2. Those who arraign His providence; 3. Those who condemn His grace. Seeing, then, that so many are obnoxious to the charge here exhibited, I will show—II. What is meant by the warning here given to them. God, in reply to Job's challenge, bids the offender, if he can, to answer Him. There are only two ways in which any answer can be given. 1. In the way of self-approving vindication; 2. In a way of self-abasing humiliation. It was in this way that Job replied.[b]

*The worth of humility.*—

Oh! I would walk
A weary journey, to the farthest verge
Of the big world, to kiss that good man's hand
Who, in the blaze of wisdom and of art,
Preserves a lowly mind; and to his God,
Feeling the sense of his own littleness,
Is as a child in meek simplicity.
What is the pomp of learning? the parade
Of letters and of tongues? Even as the mists
Of the grey morn before the rising sun,
That pass away and perish. Earthly things
Are but the transient pageants of an hour;
And earthly pride is like the passing flower,
That springs to fall, and blossoms but to die.[c]

contending with God

*a* "Contendeth shall the reprover of God contend with the Almighty." — *Gesenius.*

Job xxiii. 3—7, xxxiii. 13; Is. xlv. 9.

See *J. G. Schelhorn, Amœn. lit.*, xx. x. 329.

*b C. Simeon, M.A.*

"Pride slays thanksgiving; but a humble mind is the soil out of which thanks naturally grow. A proud man is seldom a grateful man; for he never thinks he gets as much as he deserves. When any mercy fails, he says, 'Yes; but it ought to be more. It is only matna as large as a coriander-seed, whereas it ought to be like a baker's loaf.'"—*Beecher.*

"The sufficiency of my merit is to know that my merit is not sufficient."—*Augustine.*

*c H. K. White.*

**3—5.** (3) **Lord,** Heb. *Jehovah.* (4) **vile,**[a] the expression of deep self-abasement. "A glorious confession."[b] **answer thee,** however he felt he could answer the three friends, it was altogether a different thing to answer God. **lay . . mouth,**[c] a familiar mode of expressing purposed silence. (5) **once . . twice,** a figure for "oftentimes," as Ps. lxii. 11.

Job confesses he is vile

*a* "The first effects are humiliation and submission; but silence and sub-

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mission are not enough. What is wanted is teachableness, and perfect trust, of wh. this first confession of Job does not give any clear indication: hence the occasion for a second address." — *Spk. Com.*

*b Wordsworth.*

Comp. Ge. xxxii. 10; Ezr. ix. 6; Ne. ix. 33; Ps. li. 3—5; Is. liii. 6, lxiv. 6; Da ix. 5—8; Lu. xv. 21, xviii. 13.

*c* Job xxi. 5; Jud. xviii. 19; Ps. xxxix. 9; Ro. iii. 19.

*vv.* 3, 4. *Butterfield, Homilies; S. Ogden*, 261.

*v.* 4. *T. Knowles*, ii. 217.

*d J. S. Exell.*

*e C. Simeon, M.A.*

*f W. Nicholson.*

He who has other graces without humility, is like one who carries a box of precious powder without a cover, on a windy day.

**God speaks from the whirlwind**

*a Wordsworth.*

*b Fausset.*

"This second time Jehovah speaks, not in wrath, but in the profound condescension of His majesty, in order to deliver His servant fr. dark imaginings, and to bring him to free and joyous knowledge. . . . It becomes manifest that God is

*A threefold estimate of a good man's character.*—Taken in connection with i. 8 and i. 11. I. Job's character estimated by God. 1. God estimated his character; 2. Regarded it as perfect; 3. As upright note the blessedness of this character: it included domestic protection, business prosperity. II. Job's character estimated by Satan. 1. His test was severe; 2. He was deceived and defeated. III. Job's character estimated by himself. 1. He calls attention to his vileness; 2. He takes the blame of his vileness.[d]—*True humiliation.*—We shall consider the words as expressing—I. A discovery then made. Job now saw—1. That his conduct had been sinful; 2. That his whole heart was sinful. But we must further regard his words as expressing—II. An acknowledgment of the truth then discovered. Behold here—1. The ingenuousness of his confession; 2. The dispositions with which it was accompanied. Address those—(1) Who have a good opinion of themselves; (2) Who are humbled under a sense of their vileness.[e]—*Man vile.*—I. The nature of this confession. 1. It is natural to man; 2. It is internal; 3. It is outward or actual; 4. Refer to the experience of Christians; 5. The influence of this vileness. II. What is requisite to produce this confession. 1. Divine influence to give a knowledge and conviction of it; 2. The Word of God as the instrument used by the Spirit of God. III. The consequences of this confession. 1. It produces anxiety to obtain deliverance; 2. Self-distrist: 3. A cordial approval and acceptance of the work of Christ; 4. Prayer for the regenerating power of the Spirit. Learn:—If not saved from this vileness in time, it cannot be effected in eternity. Cultivate candour and tenderness in judging of the faults of others. Let Christians see the riches of Divine grace. You will soon enter a world where no vileness exists.[f]

*A word from Robert Hall.*—When a monument was erected at Leicester in memory of the Rev. Thomas Robinson, the late Rev. Robert Hall went, accompanied by a friend, to see it. Mr. R. is represented in a standing position, receiving a Bible from the hands of the Saviour. Mr. Hall's friend expressed his admiration of the figure. Mr. Hall replied, with his usual promptitude and discrimination, "No, sir, he ought to have been prostrate at the Redeemer's feet."

**6, 7.** (6) **whirlwind,** ch. xxxviii. 1. The argument is resumed, in order that Job may be brought to acknowledge God's omnipotence, justice, and mercy, and his own need of the Divine help for deliverance.[a] (7) **gird,** *etc.*, ch. xxxviii. 3. **demand,** ask some questions which it will take all thy manhood to answer. "Since Job has accused Him of injustice, God challenges him to try: could he govern the world, as God by His power doth, and punish the proud and wicked?"[b]

*Humility.*—In proportion as the Christian grows in grace, he grows also in humility. Humility is, indeed, the vital principle of Christianity; that principle by which, from first to last, she lives and thrives; and in proportion to the growth or decline of which she must decline or flourish. This first disposes the sinner in deep self-abasement to accept the offers of the Gospel: this, during his whole progress, is the very ground and basis of his feelings and conduct, in relation to God, his fellow-creatures, and himself; and when at length he shall be translated into the realms of glory, this principle shall still subsist in undiminished

force. He shall "fall down and cast his crown before the Lamb, and ascribe blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, to Him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever." The practical benefits of this habitual lowliness of spirit are too numerous, and at the same time too obvious, to require enumeration. It will lead you to dread the beginnings, and fly from the occasions of sin, as that man would shun some infectious distemper who should know that he was predisposed to take the contagion. It will prevent a thousand difficulties and decide a thousand questions concerning worldly compliances, by which those persons are apt to be embarrassed who are not duly sensible of their own exceeding frailty, whose views of the Christian character are not sufficiently elevated, and who are not enough possessed with a continual fear of "grieving the Holy Spirit of God," and of thus provoking Him to withdraw His gracious influence.

**8, 9.** (8) **disannul,**[a] set aside; render void. **judgment,** decisions and arrangements in the government of the world. **condemn me,** make sweeping accusations.[b] **righteous,** or in order to make thyself out to have been undeservedly afflicted.[c] (9) **arm,** fig. ref. to Div. omnipotence.[d] **thunder,** ch. xxxvii. 4, 5.

*The conditions of sovereign government.*—I. Omnipotence: an arm strong and long to reach everywhere. II. Omniscience: a voice heard through all the universe. III. In contrast with this is human weakness: an arm and a voice often impotent in even the narrow kingdom of home and the family.

*Happy influence of dangers.*—A friend of mine happened to be in a boat, by which a poor simple-hearted man from St. Kilda was advancing, for the first time in his life, from his native rock to visit the world; and as he advanced towards the island of Mull, a world in itself in the estimation of the poor St. Kilda man, the boatmen commenced telling him the wonders he was so soon to see. They asked him about St. Kilda; they questioned him regarding all the peculiarities of that wonderful place, and rallied him not a little on his ignorance of all those great and magnificent things which were to be seen in Mull. He parried them off with great coolness and good-humour: at length, a person in the boat asked him if he ever heard of God in St. Kilda. Immediately he became grave and collected. "To what land do you belong?" said he; "describe it to me." "I," said the other, "come from a place very different from your barren rock; I come from the land of flood and field, the land of wheat and barley, where Nature spreads her bounty in abundance and luxuriance before us." "Is that," said the St. Kilda man, "the kind of land you come from? Ah, then, you may forget God, but a St. Kilda man never can. Elevated on his rock, suspended over a precipice, tossed on the wild ocean, he never can forget his God—he hangs continually on His arm." All were silent in the boat, and not a word more was asked him regarding his religion.[e]

**10, 11.** (10) **deck thyself,** *etc.*, at thy very best canst thou compare with the majesty of God?[a] (11) **rage of thy wrath,** see if you can produce such effects as God does. "Pour out the redundant floods of thy wrath."[b] The word *rage* means *overflowings*. **behold,** with a withering glance.[c] These sentences must be

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much more forbearing an imperfect than union."—*Delitzsch.*

"Not all the whispers that the soft winds utter speak earthly things. There mingleth there sometimes a gentle flutter of angels' wings."—*Amy Lothrop.*

**and asks Job to answer truly**

*a* From Lat. *annullare*: made up of *ad*, to; *nullum*, nothing; to make of no effect, specially applied to laws.

*b* Job xiii. 24, xvi. 9, xix. 12, 22.

*c* "Let us call to mind these words of God, when it pleases Him to visit us with loss of children or estate, or bodily sickness; for none of these things can happen to us without the just judgment of God."—*Origen.*

Ro. iii. 4.

*d* Is. lii. 1.

"The gentle wind, a sweet and passing wooer, kisses the blushing leaf."—*Longfellow.*

*e Dr. M'Leod.*

**and say if he has power and majesty**

*a* Ps. civ. 1; 1 Chr. xxix. 11.

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*b Fausset.*

*c* Ex. xviii. 11; Is. ii. 12, 17.

"Immoderate assurance is perfect licentiousness."—*Swenstone.*

"As thou desirest the love of God and man, beware of pride. It is a tumour in the mind that breaks and poisons all thy actions; it is a worm in thy treasure, which eats and ruins thy estate; it loves no man—is beloved of no man; it disparages virtue in another by detraction; it disrewards goodness in itself by vainglory; the friend of the flatterer, the mother of envy, the nurse of fury, the sin of devils, and the devil of mankind; it hates superiors, it scorns inferiors, it owns no equals; in short, till thou hate it, God hates thee."—*Quarles.*

*d Venning.*

**or if he can humble the proud, etc.**

*a* Da. iv. 37.

*b Wordsworth.*

*c* "Or it may refer to the custom of binding a cloth over the faces of persons about to be executed, Job ix. 24; Est. vii. 8."—*Fausset.*

*d Barnes.*

Is. lix. 16, lxiii. 5.

read as a Divine challenge, intending to humble the presumptuous Job. He complained of God's dealings, but how little he could do!

*The assumption of man.*—When the force of the current had carried away the temporary bridge which Xerxes had caused to be thrown over the Hellespont, on his grand expedition into Greece, he was so enraged, that he not only ordered the heads of the workmen to be struck off, but, like a madman, inflicted lashes upon the sea, to punish it for its insolence: he, moreover, affected to hold it in future under his control by throwing fetters into it.—*God's resistance of pride.*—Nimrod thought that Babel should get him a name (Gen. xi.), but God resisted his pride, and the name of his building was called Confusion ever since. Nebuchadnezzar built his palace for his honour (Dan. iv.), but God resisted his pride, and his palace spewed him out, when his servants remained in it. Shebna builded a sepulchre for his memorial (Isa. xxii.), but God resisted his pride, and buried him in another country where he had no sepulchre provided. Herod hoped when the people cried at his words, "It is the voice of God," that he should be worshipped ever after as God; but God resisted his pride, and before he descended from his throne, the worms so defaced his pomp, that none which called him God would be like unto him: so when women take more pains to dress themselves than they do all the year after, and pay dearer to maintain one vice than they need to learn all virtues, they think to please men by it; but God resisteth their pride; and all that see them, though they cap and bow to them, yet they judge worse of them, and think that they would not wear these signs of lightness and pride, unless they were light and proud indeed. Thus if their apparel condemn them before men, how will it condemn them before God? If sin did not blind them, would they so deceive themselves to take the contrary way and think that should honour them which disgraceth others? But as Balaam was stopped and knew not who stopped him; so they are resisted, and know not who resisteth them. Though they do all to please, yet they can please none: they please not God, for God resisteth them; they please not the humble, for the humble are contrary to them: they please not the proud, for the proud do envy them which strive to be as proud as they; they please not themselves, because that they cannot be so proud and brave as they would be; only they content and please the devil, because their pride doth entitle him to them.[d]

**12—14.** (12) **low,** as God did Nebuchadnezzar.[a] **in their place,** where they are standing in their confidence and pride. "Canst thou overthrow Satan, that proud Lucifer, and tread him under foot?"[b] (13) **dust,** of the grave. **bind their faces,**[c] as those of mummies ready for the tomb. (14) **also,** *i.e.* as well as others. "If he could do all this, it might be admitted that he was qualified to pronounce a judgment on the Divine counsels and dealings."[d]

*The conditions of salvation by self.*—I. What are those conditions? The possession of Divine qualities—wisdom (*v.* 8), power (*v.* 9), moral majesty (*v.* 10), holy indignation against sin (*v.* 11), the will and power to detect and punish crime (*v.* 12). II. These conditions are wanting to man. His right hand (symbol of power, wisdom, etc.) is perishing, weak, etc., and

therefore cannot save. III. God possesses these conditions; He alone is the hope of Israel and Saviour.

*Man a rebel.*—There is no creature on earth that does not fulfil its mission except man; none but what promotes God's glory except the one that boasts His image. All God's works praise Him. The song of birds, the lowing of cattle, the chime of the sea-waves, the sighing of the wind—all creatures, all sights, all sounds—are full of worship. Man, once the high priest of creation, the mysterious yet glorious link between the material and the spiritual, has put off his Eden robes, and no longer ministers a holy Levite before the Lord.[c]

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"Blind the [illegible] in secret, with all public [illegible] or in the darkness of a prison, like so many shut up in male factors.'—*Robinson.*

[c] *Rev. H. Gill.*

**15, 16.** (15) **behemoth,** *lit.* beasts.[a] It may be used as a plural of excellence, for some *great beast.* The identification with the hippopotamus appears to be now universally admitted.[b] Some, however, think the term should be regarded as a poetical personification of the great *Pachydermata*,[c] the idea of the hippopotamus being predominant. **eateth grass,** this struck attention as remarkable in a creature living so much in the water. This animal feeds on herbage, roots, etc. (16) **strength,** the characteristic of this creature. **navel,** *etc.*, or muscles of his belly; the skin of that part being even thicker than of other parts through dragging over the stones of the river-beds.[d]

*The strength of animals.*—The loins are the seat of strength in every animal; hence, in the language of Scripture, to strengthen the loins denotes an augmentation of power. A very decisive instance occurs in the second chapter of Nahum: "Make thy loins strong;" fortify thy power mightily. The same idea is involved in the prayer of the Psalmist, that the power which the wicked had so greatly abused might be diminished, till it became consistent with the peace and safety of others, or entirely taken away: "Make their loins continually to shake." The last clause, "His force is in the navel of his belly," cannot well be reconciled with the statements of ancient writers, that the belly of the elephant is the most tender and vulnerable part of his body. This is a fact so generally known, so fully authenticated, that in war the hostile spear is usually directed to the navel of that formidable animal, where the most deadly wound may be inflicted. We learn from Pliny, that when the rhinoceros attacks the elephant, he likewise aims his furious thrust at the same part of the body. This same powerful instinct which directs the horn of the rhinoceros leads the gnat, if the Talmudical writers may be credited, to the navel of the elephant, which it enters, and torments him with excruciating pains. But it is not to be supposed that the inspired writer would place the strength of that animal in the softest and most defenceless part of his frame, because it is not consistent with the truth of natural history. But the navel and belly of the hippopotamus are, like the rest of his body, protected by an impenetrable skin, of so great solidity and thickness that it is said to be formed into spears, and other missile weapons. Diodorus asserts that the hippopotamus has a skin nearly the strongest of all animals; and Ptolemy says, hyperbolically, that the robbers in India have a skin like the hippopotamus, which no arrow can pierce. Zeringhi declares that a musket-ball can make no impression on the dried skin of that animal, nor can any weapon pierce it till it has been long steeped in water.[e]

behemoth

[a] Fr. the singular Heb. word *behemah*, from the word *b'hem*, to be dumb. The LXX trans. "Behold the beasts." The plural form, "behemoth," is found in De. xxxii. 24; Ps. xlix. 12, 20, l. 10, lxxxiii. 22; Je. xii. 4.

[b] "It is clear that the description suits the hippopotamus exactly, and it alone."—*Tristram.*

*Kitto* protests the arguments in favour of the elephant, but shows that the hippopotamus is to be preferred.

[c] So called because of their thick skins.

[d] "The belly of the elephant is the weakest and most vulnerable part, owing to the comparative thinness and softness of the skin."—*Ant.*

"Real nature: nature is a word to trouble nature is Christian, promises to mankind and [illegible] our creed."—*Jowett.*

[e] *Parkes.*

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behemoth

*a Umbreit.*

*b Spk. Com.*

*c* The sickle-like teeth with wh. he cuts down grain.

"According to the E. V. the sense is, that God had power over him, notwithstanding his great strength and size, and could take his life when he pleased."—*Barnes.*

"Natural objects themselves, even when they make no claim to beauty, excite the feelings, and occupy the imagination. Nature pleases, attracts, delights, merely because it is nature. We recognise in it an Infinite power."—*Humboldt.*

"I follow nature as the surest guide, and resign myself with implicit obedience to her sacred ordinances."—*Cicero.*

*d Paxton.*

behemoth

*a* "He searches the rising ground near the river for his sustenance, in company with the animals of the land.'—*Tristram.*

*b Gesenius.*

*c* Is. xxxv. 7.

"The singularity of the land habits of our aquatic

**17—19.** (17) **moveth,** or setteth rigidly up. The hippo.'s tail is but short, about half a cubit in length. The point of comparison appears to be the bending of this short, thick, and apparently firm tail. **sinews,** *etc.*, the clause should be read, "the sinews of his thighs are twisted together like a rope." (18) **brass,** better, copper; brass being a mixed metal: read, "tubes of copper."[a] **bones . . iron,** these may be his *ribs*, as contrasted with the hollow bones of the limbs. (19) **chief,** "the masterpiece, as it were, of creation."[b] **he . . approach,** He that made him hath furnished him with a sword; referring to his great, sharp, sword-like teeth.[c]

*The lessons of created strength.*—I. The strength of the strongest is derived from God. This true not only of kings among beasts, but of kings of men. The strength of arm, will, intellect, is from God. II. God has strength to overmaster the strong. The folly of fighting against God. Who has done this, and prospered? God has a sword. The wicked are His sword. He, too, wields the sword of the Spirit. The hand that holds the sword is Omnipotence. He knows when, where, how, to strike.

*The bones of animals.*—The idea of his prodigious strength is increased by the account given of his bones, which are compared to strong pieces of brass, and bars of iron. Such figures are commonly employed by the sacred writers to express great hardness and strength, of which a striking example occurs in the prophecies of Micah: "Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion; for I will make thy horn iron, and I will make thy hoofs brass: and thou shalt beat in pieces many people." So hard and strong are the bones of the hippopotamus. The cutting, and particularly the canine teeth of the lower jaw, says Buffon, are very long, and so hard and strong, that they strike fire with steel; a circumstance which probably gave rise to the fable of the ancients, that the hippopotamus vomited fire. The substance of the canine teeth is so white, so fine, and so hard, that it is preferable to ivory for making artificial teeth. "His bones are like bars of iron;" and such, in the description of Buffon, are the bones of this animal. The cutting teeth, says that celebrated naturalist, especially those of the under jaw, are very long, cylindrical, and chamfered. The canine teeth are also long, crooked, prismatic, and sharp, like the tusks of the wild boar. The largest of the cutting and canine teeth are twelve, and sometimes sixteen, inches long, and each of them weighs from twelve to thirteen pounds.[d]

**20 - 22.** (20) **mountains,** a fig. expression intimating how enormous was his eating. **play,** not frightened by him though he was so great.[a] (21) **shady trees,** the wild lotus tree: the rhamnus, or wild prickly *lotus silvestris*,[b] or Cyrenaica, wh. grows abundantly on the hot banks of the Upper Nile. The habits of the hippo. are lazy. (22) **willows,** wh. flourish in marshy places. **brook,** Heb. *wady*, or river bed.[c]

*The hippopotamus.*—Around the hippopotamus the beasts of the field may sport in safety; for although he feeds on fishes, crocodiles, and even cadaverous flesh, he is not known to prey on other animals. It is not even difficult to drive him away from the cultivated fields, for he is more timid on land than in the water. His only resource in danger is to plunge into the deep, and travel under it a great way before he ventures again to appear. The

Indians, according to Dampier, are accustomed to throw him a part of their fish when he comes near their canoes, and then he passes on without doing them any harm. The same voyager relates an anecdote which remarkably displays the mildness of his disposition. As their boat lay near the shore he went under her, and with his back lifted her out of the water and overset her, with six men on board, but did them no personal injury. These facts prove, at once, his incredible strength and his habitual gentleness.[d]

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animals may account for their being specially noticed."—*Kitto.*

d *Paxton.*

**23, 24.** (23) **drinketh,** *etc.*, better trans. "Behold, the river overfloweth, he startleth not. He is confident though Jordan rush into his mouth."[a] The fig. is of a large animal swimming against a flooded river, with only its head above water. *drinketh*, should be ravageth, and be referred to the flooding of a river. **hasteth not,** trembleth not, is in no way troubled.[b] **Jordan,** a prob. error in copying for *Jor*, one of the Egyp. words for the Nile. (24) **he . . eyes,** or *as marg.* "Will any take him in his sight, or bore his nose with a gin?"[c] referring to the almost insuperable difficulty of capturing the behemoth.

**behemoth**

a *Revised Eng. Bib.*

b "The quiet confidence with which the heavy brute bears the rush of the formidable inundation may be contrasted with the terror and flight of beasts of prey."—*Spk. Com.*

*Note on v.* 24.—The inspired writer thus concludes his description:—"he taketh it with his eyes: his nose pierceth through snares." Bochart renders the words, "Who shall take him in his sight, and perforate his nose with hooks? that is, who shall come before him, and attack him with open violence?" It is found extremely difficult to subdue him in fair combat, and therefore the Egyptians have recourse to stratagem. They watch near the banks of the Nile, till he leaves the river to feed in the adjacent fields; they then make a large ditch in the way by which he passed, and cover it with thin planks, earth and herbage. Passing without suspicion on his return to the flood over the deceitful covering, he falls into the ditch, and is immediately despatched by the hunters, who rush from their ambush, and pour their shot into his head. From this review the fair and necessary conclusion seems to be that behemoth is not the elephant, but the hippopotamus of the Nile.[d]—*Perfection of animals.*—The perfections of animals afford perpetual scope for reflection and improvement. We can gaze with unsated admiration on the fleet hound, the graceful colt, the frolicsome kitten, the soaring eagle, the far-seeing hawk, the majestic elephant, the brilliant peacock, the gentle fawn, the strutting cock, and the stately war-horse. Every individual of the vast host of animated creation, whether bird, beast, fish, or insect, displays qualities fitted, with unerring precision, to its wants. It fills us with amazement to discover such a variety of adaptation to the external world and to ourselves, and to find that creatures so limited should be able to maintain their place amidst a scene of such conflicting interests. Instructive, however, as the spectacle is, it becomes still more so when we reflect that the Deity has thus arranged it; that it is He who has thus adjusted the different parts to each other, and to the whole, and that to Him they owe their order, their utility, and their existence. Most thinking minds have speculated on what they should feel were they permitted to witness the scenes of other worlds; yet how many pass through life without being once awakened to a perception of the vast expanse, the magnificence, and the variety, of that in which they dwell![e]

c "They take him before his eyes, his nose is pierced with cords."—*Ewald.*

Representations of the capture of the hippo. are common on Egyp. monuments of the remotest age. The trident of the hunter was hurled against the nose of the hippo.

d *Paxton.*

"If thou art worn and hard beset with sorrows that thou wouldst forget; if thou wouldst read a lesson that will keep the heart from fainting, and the soul from sleep, go to the woods and hills! No tears dim the sweet look that nature wears."—*Longfellow.*

e *Dr. McCormac.*

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## *CHAPTER THE FORTY-FIRST.*

**leviathan**

*a* Job iii. 8, marg.; Ps. lxxiv. 14, civ. 26; Is. xxvii. 1.

**1, 2.** (1) **leviathan,**[a] a generic term, implying a large, lithe, marine animal with closely serried scales. Of such creatures the crocodile[b] may be regarded as the type. **hook,** as you would a fish. **tongue,** *etc.*, canst thou sink its tongue into the line. *i.e.* make it bite into the hook on the line, and canst thou thus draw it up?[c] (2) **bore . . thorn** ?[d] "the Nile fishermen first put a ring through the gills or nose of valuable fish; they then draw a cord made of rushes through it, in order to put them thus bound into the river."

*b* "It is generally admitted that whatever be the animals specially referred to in other places, in this place it does mean and can mean no other than the crocodile."—*Kitto.*

Egyp. name of the crocodile is *Emsah*, Arab, *temseh*, from a root meaning, to draw out.

*c* *Delitzsch.*

*d* Is. xxxvii. 29.

*The crocodile.*—The crocodile is the natural inhabitant of the Nile and other Asiatic and African rivers. It is of enormous voracity and strength; it swims very swiftly, and does not hesitate to attack either man or the largest animals. Its form is that of the common lizard of our own fields. Its mouth is proportionally larger than that of most other animals, consisting of an immense opening between two jaws, which move both ways, up and down. The lower jaw has commonly as many as thirty-eight sharp, large teeth; the upper, forty; these teeth are speedily renewed, in case by accident any of them should be lost. The neck and back and sides, down to the extremity of the tail, are covered with thick, firm-set, and almost impenetrable scales. The animal is amphibious; swimming, when in the water, for the most part considerably below the surface, except when looking for prey, and then it may be seen on the surface, with its back raised above the water and floating with the stream, as if desirous of being taken by an unwary victim for a log of wood, from which it is not needful to attempt to escape.

**v. 1.** *J. Cochrane.*

**leviathan**

**3—5.** (3) **supplications,** as a captive begging for his life.[a] (4) **covenant,** submit himself to conditions; yield himself to be tamed. **servant,** as you do the domestic animals. It is wholly an untamable animal. (5) **play . . bird** ? trained to thy pleasure. **for thy maidens** ?[b] like household cat or dog.

*a* "As dolphins are said to do, with a plaintive sound."—*Lee.*

*b* "Nothing could be more incongruous than the idea of securing so rough and unsightly a monster for the amusement of tender and delicate females."—*Barnes.*

*Note on v.* 5.—"Wilt thou play with him as with a bird? or wilt thou bind him for thy maidens?" It cannot be; he is a truculent animal, and particularly hostile to children of both sexes, that, by approaching the banks of the Nile without sufficient circumspection, fall a prey to this vigilant devourer. He will even rush upon a full-grown person, and drag him in a moment to the bottom of the stream. Maximus Tyrius mentions an Egyptian woman who brought up a young crocodile of the same age with her son, and permitted them to live together in the most familiar manner. The crocodile was gentle and harmless during his early youth, but his natural disposition gradually unfolded as he advanced to maturity, till at last he seized upon his unsuspecting associate and devoured him. Ancient authors record many instances of crocodiles entering the houses of the inhabitants near the Nile, and destroying their children. These are sufficient to justify the interrogation of the Almighty, and to show that the terrible animal in question never can be completely tamed, nor safely trusted.[c]

v. 3. "An elegant prosopopœia, which expresses, with great force and beauty, the difficulty with which h· is overcom·."—*Paxton.*

*c* *Paxton.*

**eviathan**

**6—8.** (6) **companions,** the company of fishermen.[a] **banquet,** or trade, traffic. **merchants,** Heb. *cenaanim*, lit. Canaan-

*a* Fishermen in

itish merchants.[a] (7) **his skin,** which is too thick to be pierced. Fish were, and still are, sometimes taken with the spear, barbed, from *barba*, beard. The barb is the point that stands backward in an arrow or fish hook. Reference here is to the harpoon. (8) **lay,** *etc.*, experiment on ceasing him, you will never try it again. **battle,** the fierce struggle that will ensue.

*The skin of the crocodile* (*v.* 7).—If leviathan, in this sublime expostulation, signified the whale, the answer might be given in the affirmative; for that prodigious creature has been often compelled to yield to the harpoon: his skin has been filled with barbed irons, and his head with fish spears: nor is the capture of the whale attended with much difficulty. But the crocodile is said to defy the arm of the harpooner and the point of his spear, and in attacking him the assailant has to encounter both great difficulty and imminent danger.[c]

**9, 10.** (9) **the hope,** of catching him by any ordinary means. **even at the sight,** there is, perhaps, scarcely any animal whose appearance would be more likely to deter one from attacking him. (10) **so fierce,** or courageous; he will daunt even the hardiest hunter. **before me,**[a] the point God would impress is this. If Job cannot restrain one of God's creatures, how can he presume to set conditions upon God Himself?

*The fierceness of the crocodile.*—When the crocodile is satiated with prey he leaves the deeps to repose on the banks of the river, or on the shore of the sea. At such a time none are so bold as to disturb his slumbers, or provoke his vengeance; or if any one, disregarding the dictates of prudence, or eager to display his intrepidity, ventures in such circumstances to attack him, it is at the imminent hazard of his life, and is for the most part attended with fatal consequences. Diodorus assigns this as the reason that he was worshipped by the Egyptians, that their enemies, for fear of him, durst not cross the river to attack them.[b]

**11, 12.** (11) **prevented me,**[a] gone before me, so as to make me his debtor. Done me a favour first: anticipated me with service.[b] **mine,**[c] God possesses all things, even man himself. (12) **parts,** the strong limbs of the crocodile. A new and more elaborate description is now entered on. **comely proportion,** *lit.* the comeliness of his apparatus, or armour. Attention being directed to his weapons of offence and defence;[d] his mouth, teeth, scales, eyelids, nostrils, neck, and heart.

*All creation belongs to God.*—I. Therefore man is His creature. II. Therefore he should regard himself as the property and servant of the Most High. III. Therefore he should treat the rest of creation as the property of another, and should use as not abusing the things that are God's. IV. Therefore he should try to discover the best uses and application of created things for the glory of the Creator. V. Therefore he should live and act as one that shall give account.

*Note on vv.* 11—13.—These clauses, although teeming with important instruction, and, considering the authority with which they are clothed, entitled to deep attention, contribute nothing to the object of this review; we therefore proceed to the twelfth verse. "I will not conceal his parts, nor his power, nor his comely proportion." These are admirably displayed in the following particulars:—"Who can discover the face of his garment, or

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[a] Fig. [illegible] as [illegible] or guard hence they are called [illegible] or coat-[illegible]."—*Syd. Com.*

[b] Comp. Is. xxvii. 8; Pr. xxvi. 24; Zec. xiv. 21.

[c] *Paxton.*

**leviathan**

[a] Jo. xli. 8.

[a] "We ought to be thankful to nature for having made those things which are necessary easy to be discovered; while other things that are difficult to be known are not necessary."—*Epicurus.*

[b] *Paxton.*

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[a] Fr. Lat. *prævenire*, to be before-hand with; to get the start of.

[b] Ps. xxiv. 3.

[c] De. x. 14; Ps. l. 12; Ro. xi. 35; 1 Co. x. 26.

[d] The grace of his armature.

"Surely there is something in the unwearied spinal nature that our awes our little anxieties and doubts, the quiet of the deep blue sky and the quiet mountains seem to impart a quiet to the

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mind." — *T. Edwards.*

come to him with a double bridle?" The crocodile never casts his skin, like the greater part of serpents, which he so nearly resembles, but retains it to the end of his life. The horse is a most powerful and spirited animal, yet he suffers a bit to be put into his mouth, and submits to the control of man; but the crocodile spurns his dominion, and parts with his freedom only with his life. Some interpreters propose a different version, which is equally characteristic of that animal:—"Who shall venture within the reach of his jaws, which, when extended, have the appearance of a double bridle?" [e]

[e] *Paxton*

**leviathan**

**13, 14.** (13) **discover the face,** or, "lift up, as a veil, his outside covering:" *i.e.* who can detach his tough scaly covering? **come with,** or *within.* **double bridle,** the double row of teeth. Heb. *resen*, his bit, or curb.[a] (14) **doors,** the two enormous jaws. **teeth,** are terror.[b]

*The jaws of the crocodile* (*v.* 14).—The doors of his face are his immense jaws which he opens with a great and horrible hiatus. This feature of the crocodile has been mentioned by all naturalists. On the land his motions are slow, but in the river he springs eagerly on his prey, and either knocks it down with his tail, or opens a wide mouth for its destruction, armed with numerous sharp teeth of various lengths, with which, like the shark, he sometimes severs the human body at a single bite. Peter Martyr saw one whose mouth was seven feet in width. Tatius affirms that, in seizing the prey, he becomes all mouth; and Albert, that the opening of his mouth extends as far back as his ears. Leo Africanus and Scaliger affirm that he can receive within his mouth a young heifer. The vast capacity of his jaws is attested also by Martial. "His teeth are terrible round about:" or, in every respect, calculated to inspire the beholder with terror. They are sixty in number, and larger than the proportion of his body seems to require. Some of them project from his mouth like the tusks of a boar; others are serrated and connected like the teeth of a comb; hence, the bite is very retentive, and not less difficult to cure than the wound inflicted by the teeth of a mad dog. All the ancients agree that his bite is most tenacious and horrible.[c]

[a] "It has 60 teeth; some of these stand out, some of them are serrated, or like a saw, fitting into each other when the mouth is closed; and some come together in the manner of a comb, so that the grasp of the animal is very tenacious and fearful."—*Bochart.*

Pr. xxx. 14; Da. vii. 7.

[c] *Paxton.*

**leviathan**

**15—17.** (15) **scales,** Heb. *strong pieces of shields*, the rows of scales, like shields, that cover him. These scales are so hard as to resist a musket-ball. **shut up,** fitting as close as if sealed with wax. (16) **so near,** so exactly fitted to its neighbour scale. (17) **joined,** there is no natural fastening, but they lie so close and compact they seem as if fastened. "A musket-ball cannot penetrate him, save in the eye, throat, and belly."

*The scales of the crocodile* (*v.* 15).—The words of Jehovah are express, the back of leviathan is covered with numerous strong and closely connected scales, under the protection of which, he fears no assailant, he shrinks from no danger. Nor is it consistent with truth that a whale, which has no scales, is as strongly defended against the point of a spear as if he were covered with this natural shield; for if his prodigious frame were defended by the broadest, the strongest, and the closest scales, the capture, if at all practicable, would be as arduous and difficult as it is now easy. Abandoning this feeble and inadmissible argument, Caryl and others contend that some cetaceous fishes are covered with scales, quoting in support of their assertion, a passage from Arrian, that he had heard Nearchus say

[d] "The back of the crocodile,' says Thevenot, 'is covered with scales, resembling a door studded with large nails, and so hard that it cannot be pierced with a halberd.' Bertram says that the whole back of the crocodile is covered with horny flakes, or scales, which no musket-ball can pierce."—*Burder.*

"Learn hence for

that the latter had heard certain mariners say that they had seen cast upon the seashore, a monstrous fish, of fifty cubits long, which had scales all over, of a cubit thick. On this ridiculous story it is needless to make any remark; to state is to refute it: or, if refutation be deemed necessary, it is sufficient to say, that although hundreds of cetaceous fishes are caught every year, both in the North and in the South Sea, not so much as one has been found sheathed in scales, since the days of Nearchus.[a]

**18–21.** (18) **neesings,** or sneezings, snortings. Reference is supposed to be that the sun's rays making the creature sneeze, the sunlight flashes on the breath he sends forth.[a] (19) **burning lamps,** fig. for the long suppressed breath which rushes out like flames from his mouth and nostrils. (20) **smoke,** a thick vapour. **seething,** boiling. Lit. *a blown pot*, one under which a fire is blown to fierceness. (21) **kindleth coals,** comp. Ps. xviii. 8. These expressions must be treated as poetic imagery.

*Note on vv.* 19–21.—Tatius gives a similar account of the hippopotamus. His nostrils are very broad, and emit an ignited smoke, as from a furnace of fire. The very same remark is made by Eustathius: He has a broad nose, expiring an ignited smoke as out of a furnace. These two animals live in the same element, and have the same mode of respiration. The longer they continue under water without breathing, they respire the more quickly when they begin to emerge. As the torrent rushes along with greater impetuosity when the obstacle which opposed its progress is removed, so their breath, long repressed, effervesces and breaks out with so much violence, that they seem to vomit flame from their mouth and nostrils. The whale, it must be admitted, being of much larger size than the crocodile, breathes with a proportionate vehemence; it does not, however, vomit fire, but spouts water to an immense height in the air. The language of the inspired writer is highly figurative and hyperbolical, painting in the most vivid colours the heat and force with which the breath of the crocodile rushes from his expanded nostrils.[b]

**22–24.** (22) **remaineth,** permanently resideth. **sorrow,** *etc.*, lit. *panic dances before him.* Our trans. misses the point. "Terror danceth before him," hurrying away with bounds and leaps. (23) **flakes,** or *fallings*, even the flabby parts of the animal. **firm in themselves,** molten like metal. (24) **firm,** like cast metal. "The heart of the great saurians is not liable to sudden contractions and expansions."[a] **nether,**[b] wh. does not move fr. its place, and is especially hard.

*The muscles of leviathan.*—As the scales of leviathan present a coat of mail nearly impenetrable to the attacks of his enemies, so his flesh, or, as it is rendered by some, the prominent parts of his body, are like molten brass, the particles of which adhere so closely, that they cannot be separated. The very reverse of what Job affirmed of himself may be asserted of the crocodile; his strength is the strength of stones, and his flesh is formed of brass: the very refuse, the vilest parts of his flesh (for so the word signifies) are firm, and strong, and joined; or, as the Septuagint translates it, glued together, that they cannot be moved. But if the refuse of his flesh be so firm and hard, how

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ancient rules a just estimate to copy nature is to copy them." — *Pope.*

*a Parton.*

**leviathan**

*a* "Ref. may however be to the fact that the crocodile, rising fr. the water, gives notice of his approach by his sneezings and snortings, wh. shed a bright light on the foam and spray of the water, raised by his puffing it upwards in his rising to the surface. And next, his glaring eyes appear and alarm the beholder."—*Wordsworth.*

"Those rules of old, discovered, not devised, are nature still but nature methodised."—*Pope.*

*b Parton.*

**leviathan**

*a* "In large beasts who are less acute in feeling, there is great firmness of the heart, and slower motion."—*Bochart.*

*b* Matt. xxiv 41.

"Nature will be reported. All things are engaged in writing their history. The planet, the pebble, goes attended by its shadow. The rolling rock leaves its scratches on the mountain; the

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river, its channel in the soil: the animal, its bones in the stratum; the fern and leaf, their modest epitaph in the coal. The falling drop makes its sculpture in the sand or the stone. Not a foot steps into the snow or along the ground but prints, in characters more or less lasting, a map of its march."—*Emerson.*

*c Paxton.*

**leviathan**

*a* The root of the word is *sharah*, to shine, to glitter.

*v.* 25. "They feel a secret horror shoot through the whole soul; they become as it were incapable of reflection, and know not whither to turn, when they see the monster emerging from the deep thirsting for blood, and displaying the terrors of his opening jaws. The stoutest heart is humbled, and, like the mariners in the ship with Jonah, when they despaired of life, they cry every one to his God, and promise to break off their sins by righteousness."—*Paxton.*

*b Paxton.*

**leviathan**

*a* Ju. xx. 16; 1 Sa. xvii. 40, 49. "Nature never deceives us; the rocks, the mountains the streams, always speak the same language; a great must be the strength which belongs to the nobler parts of his frame? This question is answered in the next verse: "His heart is as firm as a stone; yea, as hard as a piece of the nether millstone." In all creatures, the heart is extremely firm and compact; in the leviathan it is firm as a stone; and to give us the highest idea of its hardness, Jehovah compares it to the nether millstone, which, having the principal part of the work to perform, is required to be peculiarly hard and solid. Some writers imagine that the Almighty refers not so much to the natural hardness of the heart, as to the cruel temper of the animal, or to his fearless intrepidity; he feels no pity, he fears no danger, he is insensible to external impressions as the hardest stone.[c]

**25—27.** (25) **raiseth up himself**, to make an attack. **breakings**, breaking down of the courage of these mighty ones. **purify**, should be, they lose themselves; lose their heads in their terror. They know not where to turn, they flee away with alarm. (26) **sword**, better, *harpoon*. **cannot hold**, get any hold in the tough scaly skin. **habergeon**, should mean breastplate, but here it prob. refers to some kind of missile weapon,[a] perhaps the harpoon, or trident. (27) **iron as straw**, snapping the iron weapons with his teeth.

*Note on vv.* 26—29.—In this glowing description it is plainly the design of the Almighty to show that the skin of the crocodile is impenetrable to these offensive weapons; or else that, regardless of danger, he scorns the wounds they inflict, and with fearless impetuosity seizes on his prey. This entirely accords with the accounts which natural historians give of that animal. Peter Martyr asserts that his skin is so hard it cannot be pierced with arrows; and according to other writers, he can be wounded only in the belly. But it is well known that the whale is vulnerable in every part, and is commonly struck with the harpoon on the back, where the crocodile is defended by an impenetrable buckler of large, extremely hard, and closely compacted scales. On this armour of proof the edge of the sword is blunted, and its point is broken; the spear falls harmless to the ground, and the dart rebounds from his impenetrable covering. But the habergeon, the coat of mail which the combatant puts on for his own defence, shall not save him from the devouring jaws of the monster; for he esteemeth iron as straw, and brass as rotten wood, which yield to the slightest touch, and crumble into dust before the smallest force. A shower of arrows makes no impression upon him; and the blow of a stone, slung by the most powerful hand, is no more to him than the stroke of a feather, or bit of stubble. Nor do the more dangerous weapons which the warrior hurls from his military engines depress his courage or interrupt his assault; for he laughs at the shaking of a spear, he regards it not, when, in token of defiance, it is brandished before him.[b]

**28—30.** (28) **slingstones**, wh. were a formidable weapon in the East.[a] (29) **darts**, clubs. (30) **sharp stones**, *lit.* splinters of potsherd; the under parts of his body were made of sharp pointed things, like broken pottery.

*Note on v.* 30.—What is extremely incommodious, or even painful to other creatures, occasions no uneasiness to him. Criminals were punished among the ancients by being compelled

to lie on sharp stones; but so insensible is he to pain, that he can stretch his enormous bulk upon them without inconvenience. "Sharp stones are under him; he spreadeth sharp-pointed things upon the mire." Such a place of repose is his choice, not his punishment. Or the words may refer to the scales of leviathan, which are hard and sharp as a potsherd; and to his skin, which resembles a board set with sharp stones, or iron spikes. So rough is the skin of the crocodile, so hard are his scales, and so high and pointed the protuberances which rise on his back, that a more apt similitude could not be chosen than the *tribula*, or sharp thrashing instrument with iron teeth, to represent in the liveliest manner the appearance of this terrible animal, as he lies reposing in the mud of the Nile.[b]

**31—34.** (31) **deep to boil,** the waters swirl as he moves through them. **the sea,** Heb. *yano.* "The Nile is still called a sea by the Arabs, and its inundations often give it that appearance."[a] **ointment,** used possibly to suggest the odour emitted by his stirrings and flounderings thro' the mud. (32) **to shine,** the white foam catching the sunlight. **hoary,** or silver hair. Agitated water takes a silvery look. (33) **who,** *i.e.* being one who is made without fear. (34) **he beholdeth,** *i.e.* the crocodile: looks down coldly and contemptuously on all things. **children of pride,** all animals regarded as being bold, proud, courageous, such as the lion, panther, etc.[b] All sorts of mighty beasts of prey.

*Note on v.* 33.—This clause Bochart renders: There is not his like upon the dust (which is certainly the true meaning of the phrase, *al aphar*); because the crocodile is rather to be classed among reptiles than quadrupeds. His feet are so short, that he rather seems to creep than walk, so that he may, with great propriety, be reckoned among "the creeping things of the earth." But he differs from reptiles in this, that while they are in danger of being trampled upon, and bruised by the foot of the passenger, he is liable to no such accident. It cannot be said, in strictness of speech, that he is made without fear, for he is known to fly from the bold and resolute attack of an enemy; but the expression may be understood hyperbolically, as denoting a very high degree of intrepidity. The words of the inspired writer, however, are capable of another version, which at once removes the difficulty, and corresponds with the real character of the animal: He is so made that he cannot be bruised; he cannot be crushed like a serpent, or trampled under the feet of his pursuer.[c]

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shower of snow may hide the verdant woods in spring, a thunder-storm may render the blue limpid streams full and turbulent; but these effects are rare and transient; in a few hours, or at most in a few days, all the sources of beauty are renovated."—*Sir H. Davy.*

*b Paxton.*

leviathan

*a Wordsworth.*

*b Barnes.*

Ex. v. 2; Eze. xxix. 3; Re. xx. 2, 3.

"To humble the *pride* of man, and to teach implicit submission, is the aim of Jehovah's speech, and of the book; therefore with this reference to leviathan, the type of God's lordship over creation, He closes."—*Faussett.*

"And nature affords no continued trains of misfortunes and miseries, such as depend upon the constitution of humanity; no hopes for ever blighted in the bud, no beings, full of life, beauty, and promise, taken from us in the prime of youth."—*Sir H. Davy.*

*c Paxton.*

## *CHAPTER THE FORTY-SECOND.*

**1–3.** (1, 2) **do everything,** therefore man ought to be submissive unto God.[a] **no thought,** no Divine plan or purpose could be hindered or resisted. Job felt that he had taken a wrong attitude in attempting to resist the Divine will, or question the Divine righteousness. His wrong lay not so much in the things he had said as in the *spirit he had cherished.* (3) **who,** *etc.*, ch. xxxviii. 2. Job recalls the words of Jehovah. **uttered,** things altogether improper and unsuitable.

the power and knowledge of God unlimited

*a* "Job does not learn a different truth fr. that wh. he held previously, but he

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learns it in a different way; he realises it spiritually, together with its consequences.—*Spk. Com.*

Ge. xviii. 14; Je. xxxii. 17; Mar. xiv. 36; Lu. xviii. 27.

*b J. Pulsford.*

"You are apt to think that the materials for your religious instruction must be gathered out of the Bible and out of the closet. You will get a good deal out of the Bible, and you will get a good deal out of the closet; but God does not live in the Bible, or in the closet, alone. He lives wherever you go; He lives in your soul, and His providence is manifest in your daily experience."—*H. W. Beecher.*

*c Cowper.*

**Job humbles himself before God**

*a* "We are not to suppose that Job means to say he actually saw God, but that his apprehensions of Him were clear and bright as if he did. There was no evidence that God appeared to Job in any visible form."—*Barnes.*

*b* Is. vi. 5; Eze. xx. 43, xxxvi. 31; Jno. iii. 5, 10; Ja. iv. 7—10.

*v. 5. A. Alison,* i. 22.

*c Dr. Witherspoon.*

*d C. Callaway, M.A.*

Job xxix. 11; Ps. xlviii. 8.

*The unsearchableness of God.*—Though the sun is the source and fountain of light, there is little good in gazing at the sun except to get blinded. No one ever saw the better for looking the sun directly in the face. It is a child's trick; grown up people know better. We use the light which the sun gives to see by, and to search into all things—the sun excepted. Him we cannot explore, beyond what he reveals of himself in the light and heat which he sheds upon us, and in the colours by which he is reflected from the earth. There is no searching of the sun, our eyes are too weak. How much less can we search the sun's Creator, before whom the myriads of suns are but as so many cloud-bodies! His revelation of Himself, in His works and in His Word, in His Son and in our souls, is more than enough for us. Persons who dare to go, as they say, in a directer way to Himself, are like children looking at the sun, who instead of getting more light and better eyes, get less light and an infatuated eye.[b]

*God in everything.*—

One Spirit—His
Who wore the platted thorns with bleeding brows—
Rules universal nature. Not a flower
But shows some touch, in freckle, streak, or stain,
Of His unrivall'd pencil. He inspires their hues,
And bathes their eyes with nectar, and includes,
In grains as countless as the sea-side sands,
The forms with which He sprinkles all the earth.
Happy who walks with Him; which what he finds
Of flavour or of scent in fruit or flower,
Or what he views of beautiful or grand
In nature, from the broad majestic oak,
To the green blade that twinkles in the sun,
Prompts with remembrance of a present God.[c]

**4—6.** (4) **hear,** *etc.*, Job still quotes God's words; ch. xxxviii. 3, xl. 7. In this way he intimates that they had made their due impression upon him. (5) **hearing of the ear,** I have received reports of thee from my forefathers, and from Elihu. **mine eye,** the inward eye of faith.[a] (6) **abhor myself,** or I abhor and retract the rash speeches I have made. **dust and ashes,** already humbled by affliction to sit in dust and ashes, I further repent and humble myself spiritually. Job now bewails not his suffering, but his sin.[b]

*A view of God's glory humbling to the soul.*—I. Illustrate and confirm the proposition that clear discoveries of God lead to repentance. 1. It brings to light the hidden evils of the heart; 2. It points out the evil of sin—its aggravations—and strips of all excuses; 3. It points out the danger of sin; 4. It sets forth God's infinite mercy. II. Practical improvement. 1. Learn the force of those passages of Scripture in which religion is described as the "knowledge of God:" 2. The great danger of a state of ignorance; 3. See the necessity of regeneration: 4. Observe that as men grow in religion, they grow in humility.[c]—*The second-hand and primary knowledge of God.*—I. Here is implied a second-hand knowledge of God. I have heard, etc. 1. It is very common; 2. It is very worthless. II. Here is implied a primary knowledge of God. 1. It silenced all controversy; 2. It subdued all pride.[d]

*The unsearchableness of God.*—

O Thou eternal One! whose presence bright
All space doth occupy, all motion guide;
Unchanged through time's all-devastating flight,
Thou only God! for there is none beside;
Being above all things! mighty One
Whom none can comprehend, and none explore;
Who fill'st existence with Thyself alone,
Embracing all, supporting, ruling o'er;
Being whom we call God, and know no more!

In its sublime research, philosophy
May measure out the ocean deep; may count
The sands, or the sun's rays: but, God, for Thee
There is no weight nor measure. None can mount
Up to Thy mysteries; reason's brightest spark,
Though kindled by Thy light, in vain would try
To trace Thy counsels, infinite and dark;
And thought is lost ere thought can soar so high,
Even like past moments in eternity.

*Universal influence of God.*—That sun which the beast does not recognise, that sun which the insect does not know, is after all its father and its mother. Withdraw it from shining, and there is not one heart on the globe that would know how to beat. Deprive the earth of its influence, and there is not one blade of grass, or one leaf, that would know how to live. Although everything in the world has a kind of organisation of its own, there is no vital organisation that does not lie upon the bosom of the sun, and draw its fiery milk as the source of its strength. All things are impotent without the light and the heat. All seeds, all roots, all buds, all tissues, however perfect in themselves, wait for their life till the sun imparts it. As the mill stands still, complete in itself, till the stream moves upon its wheel, so nothing can revolve in nature, and go through its appointed changes, without the impact of the sun. The seed is perfect, the germ is rolled up in it, the time has come for it to push forth; but it waits helpless, and cannot be born till the sun comes; and then, as a babe needs nursing at every minute, so the whole life of the animal and vegetable kingdom waits day by day for the ministering care and stimulus of the sun. And this is most significantly an image of that presence and power and nursing influence which reside in our God.[d]

7—9. (7) **said to Eliphaz**, &c. it was necessary not to leave the impression that Job had been wholly in the wrong, or even most in the wrong. Eliphaz was foremost speaker of the three friends, and probably the most aged. **right**,[a] in saying that afflictions are a sign of My anger, and that therefore ye, who are not afflicted, are more righteous than Job. **my servant**, used several times of Job to intimate his gracious reconciliation with God. (8) **seven**, *etc.*, a patriarchal, rather than a Levitical, sin-offering.[b] **him**, *lit.* his face, his person. **folly**, term used in the Bible with idea of wickedness. (9) **did**, as *v.* 8. They being also humbled under God's mighty hand.

*The value of human intercessions.*—From this text it is clear—I. That God will accept intercessory prayers. II. That in order

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"Besides his literal seeing of God in the symbol of the tempest, Job now saw spiritually what he had indistinctly taken on hearsay before, even God's infinite wisdom."—*Faussett.*

"God asks no rest, and requires no slumber, but holds straight on without weariness; wearing out the ages, Himself unworn; changing all things, Himself without variableness or shadow of turning! God is like the sun at noon, that casts down straight rays, and so throws down the shadows upon the ground underneath each tree; but He never, like the sun, goes westward towards his setting, turning all shadows from under the trees, and slanting them upon the ground. God stands in eternal fulness, like a sun that knows neither morning nor evening nor night, but only noon, and noon always."—*H. W. Beecher.*

*d H. W. Beecher.*

**Job intercedes for his friends**

*a* "The difference was that the friends spoke to defend a tenet, Job spoke what he believed to be true. Their great fault was their breach of charity."—*Spk. Com.*

*b* Nu. xxiii. 1.

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*v.* 7. *A. B. Evans*, 203.

"Constantine the Great was one day looking at some statues of noted persons, who were represented standing. 'I shall have mine taken kneeling,' said he; 'for that is how I have risen to eminence.' Thus it is with the Christian: if he would obtain any real eminence in the Christian life, he must be often kneeling in prayer to God." —*Bib. Treasury.*

c *Cheever.*

to their acceptance, they must be offered by holy, believing hearts. Learn :—1. Let Christians seek to be pure and upright if they wish their prayers for others to avail; 2. Let the worldly man value the prayers of God's people.

*The power of prayer.*—Among many remarkable instances of the prevalence of prayer, which Dr. Mather in his Magnalia mentions, the following anecdote of the celebrated Elliot deserves notice, which I give in Dr. Mather's own words. There was a godly gentleman of Charleston, one Mr. Foster, who, with his son, was taken captive by the Turks. Much prayer was employed, both publicly and privately, by the good people here, for the redemption of that gentleman; but we were at last informed that the bloody prince, in whose dominion he was now a slave, was resolved that, in his lifetime, no prisoner should be released, and so the distressed friends of this prisoner now concluded, "our hope is lost." Upon this, Mr. Elliot in some of his next prayers, before a solemn congregation, broadly begged, "Heavenly Father, work for the redemption of Thy poor servant, Foster; and if the prince who detains him will not, as they say, dismiss him as long as he himself lives, Lord, we pray Thee to kill that cruel prince; kill him and glorify Thyself upon him." And now behold the answer: the poor captive gentleman quickly returns to us, that had been mourning for him as a lost man, and brings us news that the prince was come to an untimely death, by which means he was now set at liberty.[c]

**the return of prosperity to Job**

**10, 11.** (10) **turned the captivity,** restored him. A proverbial expression. Amply indemnified him for all that he had lost.[a] **gave,** *etc.*, as marg. *Added all that he had been to Job unto the double*, as *v.* 12. Obs. that the Div. blessing followed on his showing, by forgiveness of and intercession for his friends, how thoroughly he was brought to a right state of mind and heart. (11) **came . . sisters,** these appear to have forsaken him in his deep distress. **eat bread,** the E. sign of reconciliation. **piece of money,** Heb. *kesitah*,[b] a much more ancient word than *shekel*. **ear-ring,** or nose-ring.[c]

*The prayer of Job* (*v.* 10).—I. The text reminds us of the manifold blessings of prayer. 1. Hereby Job was restored to health and prosperity; 2. Hereby his friends were restored to the Divine favour. II. Of the salutary influence of prayer. 1. This exercise tended to purge Job's heart of all resentment towards those he praved for; 2. It also prepared him for the return of fortune. III. The testimony of this prayer. 1. Job showed affliction had not soured his nature; 2. Affliction had ennobled his heart.—*Job's restoration to health and prosperity.*—Sketch the history of Job. We shall conclude our remarks on his history and character by showing—I. The office he performed. The friends of Job had greatly offended God by their mode of conducting their controversy with him; for their ignorance and uncharitableness God required them to humble themselves before Him: the office of intercessor was undertaken by Job. In his execution of this office we are particularly led to notice—II. The benefit resulting to himself from the discharge of it. 1. A great and immediate change was wrought in Job's circumstances; 2. By the instantaneous change, God rendered more manifest His decision of this controversy; 3. By this He put honour also on a forgiving spirit. This subject very distinctly

a Ps. xiv. 7; liii. 6, cxxvi. 4.

b This word is used Ge. xxxiii. 19; Jos. xxiv. 32.

c Ge. xxiv. 47, xxxv. 4; Ex. xxxii. 3.

"Presents are usual in visiting a man of rank in the E., especially after a calamity." —*Fausset.*

*v.* 10. *N. Parkhurst.* ii. 60; *S. Ogden*, 35; *Dr. J. Garnett, Dissert. on Job*, 329.

"Ask Nature what she has done for the lonely child of the forest and the prairie: has she ever taught him to recognise the true immensity of his heritage, or to feel that, degraded as it is, he wears a nature that a God need

shows us—(1) The manner in which our sins are to be forgiven; (2) The wisdom of waiting to see the end of God's dispensations; (3) The duty and efficacy of intercession.'

*Relief given to one in distress* (*v.* 11).—The custom to which allusion is here made is practised in the East to this day. A rich merchant in North Ceylon, named Siva Sangu Chetty, was suddenly reduced to poverty; but by this plan he was restored to his former prosperity. Two money-brokers, also, who were sent to these parts by their employer, who lived on the opposite continent, lost one thousand rix-dollars entrusted to them. They therefore called those of their caste, profession, and country, to partake of a feast, at which repast the whole of their loss was made up. When a young man puts on the earrings or turban for the first time, a feast of the same description, and for the same purpose, is given, to enable him to meet the expense of the rings, and to assist him in the future pursuits of life. When a young woman also becomes marriageable, the female relations and acquaintances are called to perform a similar service, in order to enable her to purchase jewels, or to furnish a marriage portion. In having recourse to this custom, there is nothing that is considered mean; for parents who are respectable and wealthy often act in a similar manner. Here, then, we have another simple and interesting illustration of a most praiseworthy usage of ancient days.[e]

**12, 13.** (12) **latter end,** closing period of his life. **more,** by giving him double measures of prosperity. **fourteen,** *etc.*, comp. ch. i. 3. (13) **seven sons,** *etc.*,[a] the same number that he lost in the time of his calamities; ch. i. 2. No mention is made of his wife.

*The end of a good man's life better than the beginning.*—I. For the beginning was like that of all men—sinful. II. For the course was overruled by Divine grace, and a scene of Divine discipline. III. For the end manifests Divine mercy, and is the beginning of joys unspeakable and full of glory. Application:—Many are at the end of life, without being at the beginning of anything better.

*Life compared to a voyage.*—We read that, in certain climates of the world, the gales that spring from the land carry a refreshing smell out to sea, and assure the watchful pilot that he is approaching to a desirable and fruitful coast, when as yet he cannot discern it with his eyes. And, to take up once more the comparison of life to a voyage, in like manner it fares with those who have steadily and religiously pursued the course which heaven pointed out to them. We shall sometimes find, by their conversation towards the end of their days, that they are filled with peace, and hope, and joy: which, like those refreshing gales and reviving odours to the seaman, are breathed forth from paradise upon their souls; and give them to understand with certainty that God is bringing them unto their desired haven.[b]

**14, 15.** (14) **Jemima,** *dove;* or perhaps *daylight*, after the night of trouble. **Kezia,** *cassia*, sweet and gracious as this favourite plant. **Keren-happuch,** *a horn or vase of pigment*, such as was used for enhancing the beauty of the eyes.[a] (15) **inheritance,** this was unusual in the case of daughters.

*Names of Job's daughters.*—These names are very characteristic,

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not refuse to wear? Or does not he—as all—turn from the heavens above him to his kindred earth, and (though few may be his outward solicitings to guilt) 'say to corruption, Thou art my father; to the worm, Thou art my mother and my sister!' (Job xvii. 14.) Nature can teach discontent with this world, but there her lesson well-nigh closes; she talks but vaguely, and feebly and falsely of another!"—*Archer Butler.*

*d C. Simeon, M.A.*

*e Roberts.*

**Job's possessions and family**

*a* Ps. cvii. 41.

*v.* 12. *A. Macdonald*, 195; *A. G. Spencer*, 129; *B. C. Sowden*, 93.

"The merchant who towards spicy regions sails, smells their perfume far off, in adverse gales; with blasts which thus against the fainting blow, fresh odorous breathings of God's goodness flow."—*Bishop Ken.*

*b Townson.*

**Job's daughters**

*a* "The names indicate great beauty and grace both of person

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and of character."—*Spk. Com.*

"The names of the daughters but not of the sons of Job are given. Some have supposed that certain districts of Arabia derived their names fr. these daughters of Job."—*Wordsworth.*

Ps. cxliv. 12.

*v.* 14. *J. C. Dieteric, Antiq.* 414.

"The great Name in the Jewish religion was Jehovah; the great Name in the Christian religion is Jesus."—*John Bate.*

*b Dr. Kitto.*

the death of Job

*a* Ge. l. 23; Ps. cxxviii. 6; Pr. xvii. 6.

*b* Ps. xci. 16; He. ix. 27; Jno. xi. 25.

"The translators of the LXX. add 'And it is written that he will rise again with those whom the Lord will raise up, etc."—*Barnes.*

*v.* 16. *J. Smith, Disc.* 145.

*c Sharon Turner.*

and are exactly of the same class as are at the present day given to women in the East. The first name, *Jemima*, according to the Targum, means "day;" or may as probably have the signification of "turtle" or "dove," which it bears in the Arabic language. The second is *cassia*—the aromatic of that name. And the third appears to be correctly rendered by the Vulgate, *cornu-stibii*—"the horn or vessel of *stibium*," that is, of paint, such paint as the eyes were adorned with. All these names are in exact conformity with the present usages, in which the names of females are taken from whatever is considered agreeable and beautiful—flowers, fruits, gums, perfumes, precious stones, and the like. The last name is the most singular. It is one of the characteristics of the Orientals that they do not keep in the background the materials and instruments of personal adornment, but obtrude them on every occasion, as objects calculated to suggest agreeable ideas. Hence the vessels containing paints, unguents, and perfumes, give names to females, supply images to poetry; and painted representations of them, with their names inscribed upon them, occur, equally with representations of flowers, on the walls of palaces in the East. It is also remarkable that this custom of painting the eyes should have existed at so very early a period as the name of Job's daughter intimates. Yet we know that it existed in the time of the kings (see 2 Kings ix. 30); as also among the ancient Egyptians, as appears from their paintings and mummies, as well as from the fact that vessels with remains of the black powder, and the probes or pencils for applying it to the eye, have often been found in the ancient tombs.[b]

**16, 17.** (16) **lived . . years,** he was 70 at the time of his calamity. Prolonged life, length of days, was another sign of gracious Div. acceptance.[a] (17) **full of days,** sated and contented with his earthly lot.[b]

*The evening of life.*—Amid life's varied streams and sources of transport and pain, often mingled and often alternating, we learn at last to prefer those milder and more certain or enduring pleasures which calmly soothe us, to the bustle, the labour, and the excitements that engage and animate our youth and maturer strength. Agitation and emotion at length lose their charm; they disturb more than they amuse us. As age advances to its sober evening, we perceive and appreciate the value of conscious life without pain; of sedative tranquillity; of reposing, yet not inactive thought; of sensibility without perturbation; of patient hope; of resting movability; of sensations that please, but do not agitate; of intellectual rumination; and of those solemn aspirations of sacred foresight, of prospective gratitude, and of humble reliance on the great mediatorial Benefactor, which close our mortal days with true dignity, and make even dissolution an inestimable blessing.[c]

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